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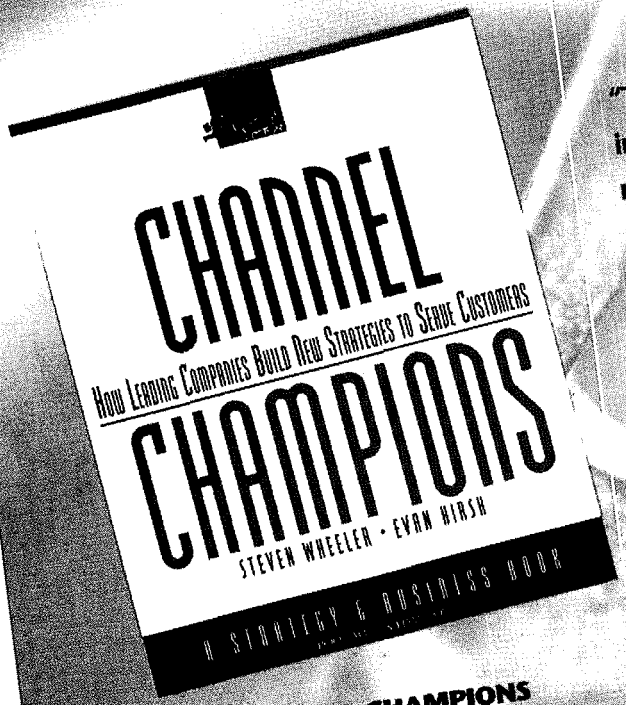
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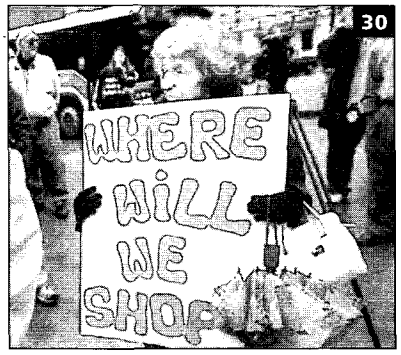

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Albert Agonistes

What Gore's winning storyline tells us about politicians

By Nick Gillespie

As I write this, Al Gore, after being down by as many as 15 percentage points, is running neck and neck with George W. Bush in most national polls. More important, perhaps, he is being treated with newfound deference by the press. Over the past few months, he has metamorphosed from an overbearing, barely animated beta-male into a dedicated, savvy pol who even exudes a glamorous whiff of tragedy. However long- or short-lived Gore's successful makeover turns out to be, it is worth puzzling over, as it suggests just how expert politicians are at adapting their personal storylines to changing circumstances—and just how critically the public must read such narratives.

In 1998, I went to a workshop attended by a number of editors, writers, and publishers of high-profile national publications. Though the workshop had nothing to do with politics—it was a nuts-and-bolts look at how to launch new and to improve existing publications—I had a number of conversations there that led me to conclude that the Washington press corps would attack Gore relentlessly as he tried to make his move into the White House. The reason for the hostility? The vice president has a terrible reputation for being extremely ham-handed when it comes to managing his press coverage.

In a session on "ethical dilemmas" in publishing, the editor of a major women's magazine related an incident in which the magazine was interviewing the wife of a "big-shot politician" prior to a much-ballyhooed conference on raising children. In the question-and-answer period that followed, the editor allowed that the figures under discussion were Tipper and Al Gore. During the interview, Tipper Gore voluntarily brought up some difficult, highly publicized problems she'd had with her own children, most memorably the time one of her underage daughters was accused of drinking in public and mouthing off to the cops. Shortly after conducting the interview, but before it ran, the magazine got a furious call from one of the vice president's people, screaming that if any of the sensitive material saw print, the magazine would not only be disinvited to the kids conference, but would never again have access to any White House or administration figures.

Curiously, the ethical quandary the editor offered up for discussion was essentially, How quickly do you fold under such pressure while maintaining the smallest shred of professional integrity? (Such are the concerns of access journalism.) In the discussion that followed, I brought up widely circulated—and in England, published—stories about the vice president's son being caught using drugs in 1996 and suspended from school as a result. (Tipper had somehow failed to mention *that* difficulty during her interview.) As James Adams put it in an October 13, 1996, London *Times* story, "Reporters all knew...that Albert Gore III, the 13-year-old son of the vice-president, had been suspended from school earlier this year for smoking marijuana. A tearful phone call by Gore to senior editors [at *The Washington Post*] ensured the story was never published."

Forget about the on-the-record responses of the Second Lady, I suggested. Didn't journalists have a duty to report on such actions, especially when the politicians involved are hypocritically prosecuting a drug war that arrests less-well-connected kids for similar behavior? Most of the people in the room scoffed at the idea on the grounds that Albert III was not a public figure (though his father regularly uses him as a campaign prop) and that such stories would surely "ruin" the boy's future (a laughable suggestion, and one that ignores kids whose lives actually have been ruined by policies supported by Gore). Once the session was over, however, two writers for a large newspaper with a national readership (not *The Washington Post*) told me separately that their publication's gossip columnist was set to run a piece on the story until *their* pub-

lisher got a call from the vice president as well.

Given such tactics, I assumed there'd be a backlash once Gore actually hit the campaign trail in earnest (displaced contempt for Clinton wouldn't help him either). Even though many (perhaps most) journalists covering Gore share his politics, they don't like being bullied, and their resentment would out itself in one form or another. Sure enough, much of the early campaign coverage toward Gore was sharply critical, if not blatantly hostile, especially when discussing the vice president's attempts to manage his image. Last fall's revelation that author-cum-political-operative Naomi Wolf was being paid $15,000 a month to coach Gore in the ways of the alpha male (wear earth tones, show your teeth more) might have been the low point to date of the vice president's campaign, but it was simply one of many such embarrassments. (Remember the phony photo-op on the Connecticut river?) While everyone expects politicians to employ image consultants, the idea that the vice president would need (much less heed) that particular sort of advice was bathetic at best.

To be sure, Gore had experienced problems with self-fashioning before, perhaps most spectacularly at the 1996 Democratic National Convention, when he teared up while recounting how his sister Nancy had started smoking as a teenager and died from lung cancer in 1984. In a speech memorable only for its shamelessness, Gore swore to "pour [his] heart and soul into the cause of protecting our children from the dangers of smoking." The speech was a hit, earning raves in *Time*'s "Winners and Losers" column ("tears, not smoke, in their eyes as he tells delegates of his sister's battle with lung cancer") and *Newsweek*'s "Conventional Wisdom Watch" ("VP kicks butts in speech"). Soon after, however, Gore admitted to receiving campaign donations from tobacco companies through 1990 and that his family continued to lease land for tobacco crops for years after his sister's death. His infamous boast during his failed 1988 presidential run—"Throughout most of my life, I raised tobacco...sprayed it...chopped it ...shredded it...spiked it...and sold it"—came back to haunt him as well.

These days, however, it's mostly smooth sailing for Gore as far as the press goes, even as various Buddhist Temple confederates of his get indicted and convicted. What's different? Emerging from the primary season, Gore has managed to humanize himself in ways that play especially well with reporters. Where George W. Bush has done little to counter the perception that he's simply a middle-aged Richie Rich, Gore, though possibly even more privileged, has hinted at the psychic depth and brooding intensity of a dramatic protagonist.

Consider, for instance, his Vietnam narrative, a wonderful bit of self-serving storytelling masquerading as a profile in courage. Although the election of Bill Clinton seemingly made a candidate's military past completely irrelevant, John McCain's presence in this year's primaries changed that. In the face of a genuine war "hero," the other three major candidates' wartime status took on new life. Bill Bradley and George W. Bush had both slipped free of active service in Southeast Asia. Gore, however, like McCain, actually went to Vietnam, albeit as a journalist who only served five months (less than half the normal hitch) and who never saw direct action with the enemy (at various times during his political career, Gore's tendency to embellish his experience has caused him embarrassment). While the matter has not been settled definitively, there is good reason to believe that Gore was protected from anything approaching actual danger while in Vietnam.

Nowadays, Gore is casting his decision to enlist as a great moral sacrifice that sets him apart from other politicians. In 1970, Albert Gore Sr., the senator from Tennessee, was facing a difficult reelection campaign. Al Jr., by his own account, was strongly opposed to the war but also wanted to help his father. (He was also, as *The Washington Post*'s David Maraniss and Ellen Nakashima have suggested in cloyingly sympathetic tones, desperate to "maintain his political viability" à la Bill Clinton.) Gore has called his situation a "real conundrum" but in the end, he enlisted, even turning down a National Guard post a relative had secured for him. Alas, Gore Sr. lost his race and Gore Jr. went off to "fight" in Vietnam, having offered himself up for naught. The tragic structure, if not its actual content, of such a story packs an emotional wallop.

Al Gore's newfound storytelling skills are impressive, allowing him even to turn his mediocre academic record and collegiate pot smoking into a plus.

Indeed, it allows Gore—a privileged "senator's son" of the sort decried in Creedence Clearwater Revival's bitter protest song "Fortunate Son"—to be both a soldier and an anti-war protester, a man of principle who risked absolutely nothing. Indeed, no one has even asked him how a high-profile war protest from someone in his position might have affected U.S. policy.

Of course, if elections hinged simply on such narratives, then John McCain would be the Republican nominee and Bob Dole would be the incumbent. But the candidates who know how to tell good personal tales—Ronald Reagan, the Midwesterner who became a movie star; Bill Clinton, the man from Hope; even Jimmy Carter, the peanut farmer from Plains—have a habit of getting elected. Al Gore's newfound storytelling skills are impressive, allowing him even to turn his mediocre academic record and collegiate pot smoking into a plus (as the *Post* put it, such revelations "subvert" the notion that he was always an ass-kissing grind).

It is, of course, far too early in the electoral process to predict anything about November. But especially given George W. Bush's manifest inability or unwillingness to craft his own autobiography in attractive terms, Gore, at least early in the campaign season, has emerged as the candidate with character. In an age where the politics of personality have been getting a lot of attention, that's no small advantage.

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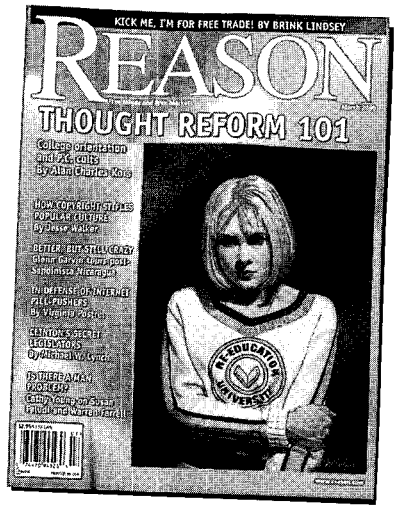

Controlling Student Bodies

As somebody who's recently been on the front lines in the conflict over multiculturalism and indoctrination on college campuses, it pleased me to see Alan Charles Kors' "Thought Reform 101" (March 2000).

One of my first assignments on the student newspaper at Tulane this fall was to cover an "Undoing Racism" session by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. When I arrived I was told that I would have to be an active participant in the training if I wanted to be present at all. It seemed clear, by that point, that an objective story was not what they had in mind.

Journalistic integrity prevents me from giving my opinion, but I can share a few things that went on. Racism was defined as a concept separate from race prejudice, one in which whites supposedly oppressed everyone else whether or not their attitudes were actually racist. Race prejudice, and the concept of race itself, was defined as a specious and ignorant belief. A lecture on axiology, however, followed this.

When the discussion turned to solutions, I proposed making the goal of anti-racism to discard the concept of race altogether and recognize everybody as an individual. I was told by the facilitator that the goal should be, basically, to have an aesthetically pleasing color balance and "appreciate others' struggles," and that recognizing individuals is "crap" and something only whites want.

Bennett Kalafut
New Orleans, LA

Dr. Kors' article on this subject omitted one important piece of information: How loudly do those who conduct these courses speak? If it's so loud that the students can't sleep, then it may indeed be Orwellian. If not, well, is it all that big a deal?

I remember required courses of similar ilk when I was a freshman—different subjects, of course, but the same exploitation of a captive audience. Freshmen are the eternal captives. But unless they've changed from my day, their ear for arrant nonsense hasn't expired.

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Colleges and universities would be better off spending the money now being used to hire the thought police to hold pizza parties or rock concerts or just about any free and open gathering where impressionable freshmen could meet each other, one on one, and explore for themselves the delight of diversity.

Robert J. Shedlarz
Navarre, OH

Although I understand and can appreciate Professor Alan Charles Kors' position, I disagree with his premise that working with students on diversity issues amounts to an invasion of liberty. Professor Kors named me as one of the "most celebrated facilitators at the moment" on what he calls "diversity education," and although he recognizes my intentions as good, he maintains that the effect of my work is "frightening, atavistic, and irrational," by means that are "deeply intrusive."

I have to say that Professor Kors has greatly misunderstood not only the purpose of "diversity education" but also the

important need for it. My work is not about "training" individuals on issues of race. But is it about moral re-education? That depends. What if there were "diversity training" programs operating in Nazi Germany with a goal of "moral re-education" that had the effect of stopping the Holocaust? Would Professor Kors have supported such education? What if education had been able to raise the level of consciousness of individuals who created and perpetuated the institution of slavery with the effect of dismantling it earlier? What if our "re-education" programs served to eliminate the epidemic violence heaped on people from various ethnic cultures, women, gays, etc.? What if education were provided to the leaders and citizens of this country so that they recognized their actions in westward expansion were resulting in the genocide of Native Americans and practices were therefore changed to stop the genocide? Would Professor Kors support such education?

The heart of my work, and of others who are implementing an ethical practice with regards to diversity, is to assist individuals in looking at how they have been taught to perpetuate systems in our society that discriminate based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and class and to learn how to take action to eliminate all "isms." Is it wrong for us as a society to work toward the elimination of racism, sexism, or classism? I do not think so. I am convinced that our society is based on power dynamics that impart privileges for some to the exclusion of others. The "founding fathers" began this democratic country with only landowners and men having the right to vote. Institutions and policies grew out of this way of thinking. In the U.S., power has always been concentrated in the hands of a few. This has led to an array of societal problems with people from one group viewed as expendable, immoral, or less-deserving.

Re-education happens every day to all young people to perpetuate a system that maintains power for some to the exclusion of others. Young people are not born with a belief system that some people are better than others, more deserving, more intelligent—they have to learn this. The work that I do with students, sometimes through the film *Skin Deep*, is about transformation, not what Professor Kors calls thought reform or "re-education." I am interested in transforming our society, perhaps our world, into one where freedom, justice, and equality are realities for everyone, not just the few.

I believe people come into the world wanting to do good, but are in fact "re-educated" every day to maintain a system around them of the "haves" and the "have-nots." Do people need to be "re-educated" in order for transformation to happen? I believe so. Is this taking away their individual freedom? I think not.

Hugh Vasquez
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All Rights Should Be Reserved

Jesse Walker's piece about copyright law ("Copy Catfight," March) seems more fitting to *The New Republic* than to REASON. Mr. Walker's assertion that copyright laws create government-granted monopolies is puzzling. A government recognition of the right to specific property is merely the legal demonstration of an ownership interest, whether it is the deed to a home, the title to a vehicle, or the recording of a UCC financing statement. The fact that government acts to protect property rights seems desirable in any society that values classical liberal ideals.

His pragmatic arguments that the public good is served by forcing Disney to release *Song of the South* or that somehow our collective lives will be diminished by the fact that copyrighted antique movies are rotting in some warehouse somewhere ring hollow. His implication that the Gershwin heirs didn't write the music to which they hold copyrights, and therefore should be denied their property rights, amounts to an outright denial of the right to dispose of one's property as one sees fit.

Most importantly, Mr. Walker forgets that the creation of intellectual property renders it, in fact, property. While it is true that "shared experiences" help create culture, they do not create ownership. My generation grew up with fast cars and drag strips. Those shared experiences helped create our particular culture but they did not give us an ownership interest in General Motors. Instead, the ownership of property resides with the person who created or acquired it through moral means. Additionally, the fact that Bob Dylan, George Lucas, and Disney act hypocritically or even stupidly does not diminish their right to property. By the same token, the fact that the Grateful Dead consistently allowed anyone to tape their concerts does not diminish their property rights either. It just made them cool.

Mr. Walker has amply demonstrated that intellectual property rights are messy and inconvenient. But so are property rights for land. Trespass and dumping are problems that could be solved with gunfire. However, civilized people attempt to solve those problems through appropriate law. The right to intellectual property is no different, and those who own the property, no matter how desirable that property is, have the sole right to determine its use and disposal. That is a basic tenet of classical liberal thought.

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I would like to correct a flawed idea about copyright law based on my own personal experience. The owner of a copyright must vigorously defend it if it is to maintain its legal validity. In 1997, I wrote a book about backgammon strategy (*Backgammon: Winning With The Doubling Cube*, The Gammon Press), whose total potential audience would be limited to several thousand serious backgammon players.

The book resulted from a series of articles I had posted to the Internet newsgroup for backgammon. Several individuals who maintained Web sites devoted to backgammon asked if they could post my

articles on their sites. On the advice of my publisher, I refused. Since the wording of many of the articles would end up similar to that of the book, I would weaken my copyright by allowing such articles to remain on the Web sites.

There is competition even in the tiny market for high-level backgammon book publishing. Another publisher contacted me while I was writing my book and offered to publish it without paying me any royalties. Not surprisingly, I stuck with my first publisher and was happy that I could, if necessary, prevent the second publisher from simply taking my original articles off the Web and publishing them for a profit or even duplicating my book after claiming that the copyright was invalid. In the latter case, I probably would have won a court battle.

When Twentieth Century Fox required Alexander Thompson to remove his transcripts of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* from the Web, it was not "clearly being stupid." Instead, it was simply vigorously defending its copyright. If Fox allowed the transcripts to remain after their existence was called to its attention, it would have a much weaker legal position if another party then used those transcripts to film duplicate episodes with unknown, cheap actors, then sold those episodes to a network.

Further, why should there be any limit at all to the length of a copyright? After all, there is no limit to the length of time a particular family can own, and profit from, physical property.

Peter Bell
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Jesse Walker made some good points about the aggressive behavior of the copyright-owning industries, but some statements need correcting, such as the statistic that the term of copyright has been extended 11 times in the past 40 years. The copyright term has only been changed three times in the last 100 years—in 1909, when the initial and renewal terms were extended to 28 years; again in 1976 when the term was extended to the lifetime of the author plus 50 years; and finally in 1998 when it was extended to lifetime of the author plus 70 years.

Congress was anticipating the change it would eventually make in the 1976 Act as early as the mid-1960s because the term of lifetime plus 50 years was the international standard to which the U.S. was expected to conform if it wanted to join the Berne Convention. But the bill was held up for other reasons, so Congress passed a series of one-year extensions for works copyrighted under the 1909 Act so that they would not fall into the public domain pending the official change in the term of copyright. These nine extensions were fully absorbed by the changes made by the 1976 Copyright Act, and none of them acted as separate changes in the term of copyright.

Second, Mr. Walker's reason for why the U.S. adopted the lifetime plus 70 term is that whatever Disney wants, Disney gets. If that were true, why has Disney consistently lost copyright battles to the cable and the satellite industries? The story that lifetime plus 70 was Disney's doing began with a *Washington Post* article last year, but the hearings and the legislative history of the bill reveal that the U.S. wanted to conform to the new international standard set by first Germany and then the entire European Union.

Mr. Walker makes a good point that people who want to use out-of-print books ought to have some relief under fair use because there are no copies for them to buy legitimately. Surprisingly, whether a book is out-of-print is not among the criteria for fair use listed in the 1976 Copyright Act. Fair use was a common law defense until the 1976 Act. The development of common law depends on cases coming before judges and there was an absence of cases of authors complaining about people using out-of-print books, probably because the authors had abandoned their efforts at commercially exploiting their works.

In 1976, Congress codified the fair use criteria developed under common law, and so, inadvertently, it also codified the lack of attention paid under the common law to people who want to use out-of-print books. But Congress has been known to amend its codification of fair use, so this could be a good area for legislative reform.

Robert Cassler
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Jesse Walker replies: The Constitution gives Congress the power to "promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries." This is not a recognition of a preexisting right. It is a privilege assigned by the government. Ordinary property arises from scarcity: Two bodies cannot have competing claims on the same house. But both Alexander Thompson and Fox can possess the idea of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and use it for their own ends, without encroaching on the other's ability to do the same.

So I appreciate Mr. Snell's comment about General Motors, but a better comparison, given the kind of copyright violations I wrote about, would be if the company started suing people who sold parts from Oldsmobiles. Or made paintings of Cadillacs.

If Mr. Bell really thinks *Buffy* fans would rather watch "duplicate episodes with unknown, cheap actors," or that any network would expect to make money by airing them, then he knows nothing about the TV business. The more important question is whether fans should be allowed to shoot such faux-episodes for their own amusement and post them on their Web sites. I think they should.

Readers can decide for themselves whether they accept Mr. Cassler's explanation of when a copyright extension isn't really a copyright extension. But I never claimed that "whatever Disney wants, Disney gets." The fact that Disney might lose a battle with another powerful special interest—the cable and satellite industries—says nothing about its ability to defeat the disorganized opponents of the copyright extension. (Nor was Disney the only company pushing for the extension.)

When the European Union extended its native copyrights, it agreed to extend foreign copyrights as well, but only if we foreigners also extended our terms. This did help galvanize copyright holders who sell their wares in Europe—including Disney—to push for a change in the national law. But that was hardly the only reason anyone endorsed the bill—and it only strengthens the case that the extension was meant to protect corporate privileges, not individual rights.

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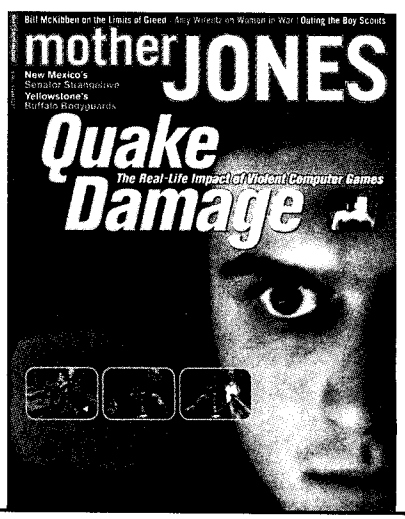
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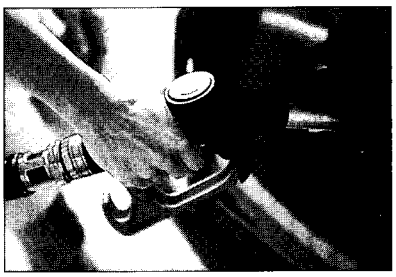
Citings

Gas Pains

By Brian Doherty

In March, the EPA announced a ban on the fuel additive Methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE), a substance it had previously mandated. This ban followed nearly a year of low-key national panic, starting when California announced its own ban of the additive in April 1999 after the chemical began showing up in drinking water supplies from Santa Monica to Lake Tahoe.

Several other states have found MTBE in their water since then, and in January it earned the health-scare laurel: a scary *60 Minutes* segment. A February study from Rutgers University found that MTBE can cause headaches and eye irritations in humans. The usual cancers in lab animals have also been created, under conditions nowhere near analogous to exposure in minuscule amounts through drinking water.



MTBE has been added to fuel in 16 states because it increases gasoline's oxygen content, helping it burn cleaner. Areas with low air qualities, as defined by the feds, are required by the EPA to have 2 percent oxygen content in their fuel. MTBE had been the cheapest and most efficient way to meet that clean air mandate.

The EPA now wants to replace the 2-percent rule with a rule forcing gas to contain a certain amount of material from renewable sources. With either the 2-percent rule with no MTBE, or the EPA's new proposal, farmers are cheering. Corn-based ethanol is the other leading oxyfuel option, and unlike MTBE (a petroleum byproduct), it's renewable. MTBE beat ethanol in the market because of lower shipping and mixing costs—a switch from MTBE to ethanol will be felt in the pocketbook at the filling station.

The EPA hasn't emphasized that MTBE is around in the first place because of its own oxyfuel mandate. Nor has it pointed out that the only way this stuff gets into water in the first place is along with the gasoline to which it's added. Gasoline in your water is a bad thing, MTBE notwithstanding.

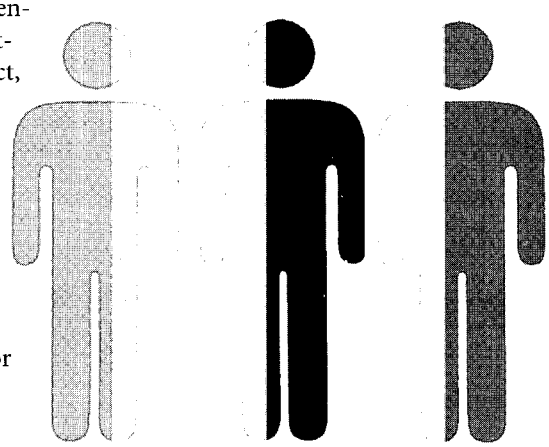
In other words, the MTBE flap is the very model of modern environmental action: Not only is banning MTBE a reaction to a federally created problem, but getting rid of it won't make anyone's water safer to drink.

Coloring America

By Jeff A. Taylor

The Office of Management and Budget has cleared up one big census confusion: Government bureaucrats will determine your race. People who check off more than one racial group on census forms will be assigned to one category for the purpose of monitoring discrimination and enforcing civil rights laws. And anyone who checks both "white" and a minority designation will be counted as a minority when the feds pore over the census data to help enforce the Voting Rights Act, job bias rules, and other racial bean-counting laws.

The OMB had to make this ruling for government agencies because of differences in census data sets. The problem is that the census forms individuals receive allow 63 possible race categories, while schools, em-



Balance Sheet

By Jeff A. Taylor

ASSETS

△ **▲ Linked Up.** A federal judge in Los Angeles rules that so-called "deep linking"—jumping past a Web page's front door to get to content via another site—is not copyright infringement. Surfers are "automatically transferred to the particular genuine Web page of the original author. There is no deception in what is happening."

△ **▲ Play Ball.** Baseball opening day in San Francisco means a new privately funded $345 million ballpark. Pacific Bell Park is the first privately built Major League Baseball stadium in 38 years. Other cities still try to fend off demands for public cash from sports moguls.

△

△ **▲ Weight Gain.** The IRS mulls making the cost of weight-loss programs tax deductible. Anti-fat groups lobby with the message that excess weight is closely tied to disease. The IRS recently ruled that anti-smoking programs count as a medical expense. Maybe moderate alcohol consumption can be next.

△

△ **▲ Blown Out.** The Supreme Court rules that the FDA can't regulate tobacco products. Justices say that Congress never explicitly gave the FDA that job, and so the bureaucrats can't claim it no matter how lofty the goals.

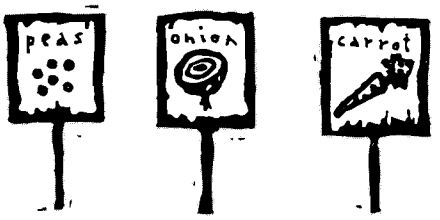
△

△ **▲ Voice Lessons.** While the feds futz with new regulations for Web site accessibility, the private sector actually does something about it. The VoiceXML Forum, made up of Lucent, IBM, Motorola, and AT&T, creates a spec that will transform Web links to speech.

△

△ **▲ Chain Gang.** A funny thing happens when big chain drugstores set out to kill Mom & Pop shops: They fail. After seeing their numbers fall by nearly a quarter since 1992, the National Association of Chain Drugstores reports that indie drugstores are again on the rise. Willingness to experiment, nimble stocking to produce bargains, and good service explain why.

△



▼ **Farmed Out.** Government surveys show American farmers, bending to a greenie fear campaign, intend to plant 24 percent less genetically modified seed this year. Seed-makers belatedly launch a multi-million dollar effort touting the virtues of science.

▼ **Preying Hands.** Alighting from the pecked-over remains of Microsoft and big tobacco, state attorneys general turn their gaze to gun makers who, unlike Smith & Wesson, refuse to cut a deal with the government. Subpoenas hit the gun industry in search of an anti-S&W "conspiracy."

▼ **New New Thing.** President Bill Clinton opens the "White House Conference on the New Economy," thereby ensuring that whatever the New Economy is, it is almost over.

▼ **Dilbert Tax.** High tax states like New York look to telecommuters as a potential source of revenue. Pajama-clad drones can pay income taxes if their employer has offices in a rapacious jurisdiction.

▼ **Wanking Matilda.** The Australian Broadcasting Authority notifies Aussie Web sites guilty of violating standards for content that some X- and even R-rated material must be taken down. Some sites respond by moving their servers offshore, but others comply.

▼ **Problem Parts.** The Federal Trade Commission frets that plans by the Big Three automakers to build an online parts bazaar violate antitrust rules. The Pep-Boys-meets-eBay venture would have $240 billion a year to spend and allow the companies to pool orders, thus saving money.

LIABILITIES

ployers, and other institutions can report only about a dozen categories. So there will obviously have to be some mix-and-match when is comes time to look for "patterns" of discrimination.

Acquitting Sprawl

By Brian J. Taylor

Suburban sprawl has been blamed for almost every social ill, with the most common accusations damning it for traffic congestion and the decline of the inner city. But according to a recent study, it's getting a bum rap.

In "Some Realities about Sprawl and Urban Decline" —published in the most recent issue of *Housing Policy Debate*, a journal of the Fannie Mae Foundation, a private (though tax funded) community development group—Anthony Downs of the Brookings Institution distinguishes sprawl from general suburban development by listing 10 characteristics specific to the former, such as low-density "leapfrog" development, reliance on the private automobile, and a political order in which planning power is fragmented across several municipal authorities. According to Downs, most analysts oversimplify the problem—and possible solutions —by focusing on only a few of sprawl's defining traits.

Downs analyzed data from 1980 and 1990 in 162 urbanized areas to measure both sprawl and urban decline, using nine variables for each. Low or diminishing population density, for example, was a marker for sprawl; so was the ratio of central city density to densities on the outlying fringe. Measures of urban decline included increasing crime rates, decreasing income, and decreasing population.

Downs' conclusion, which he found "very surprising": "There is no meaningful and significant statistical relationship between any of the specific traits of sprawl, or a sprawl index, and either measure of urban decline." The "basic traits of the general growth process"—the relatively high standards required of new housing, the concentration of public housing in urban cores, the exclusionary zoning laws adopted by suburban governments, the tax systems that encourage ▶

SOURCES

"As with every other kind of government action, I think the first rule has to be: Do no harm. And I think it is likely that the **more government tries to support open source, the more it will end up harming it."** So writes Jeff A. Taylor—author of *Reason Express*, our weekly online news update—in an online debate on whether the government should foster "open source" software standards. The debate, sponsored by *The American Prospect*, also features Eric S. Raymond, Nathan Newman, and Jonathan Band, and is available at **http://www.prospect.org/controversy/open_source/**. To subscribe to *Reason Express*, point your browser to **http://www.reason.com/re/subscribe.html**

QUOTE

"In a country where Madonna is an icon...**a boy relieving himself is not that bad."**
—Bernard Geenen, Belgian trade official, reacting to Ohio's decision to ban the beer Manneken Pis because its label features the famous 17th-century Brussels statue of a child urinating, in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 9, 2000.

BRICKBATS

◆ In Norway, Justice Minister Einar Doerum wants to let witnesses testify in court anonymously. Defense attorneys have objected on the grounds that if they don't even know the witnesses' names, it will be difficult to cross-examine them.

◆ In Milford, Illinois, a beagle puppy recently made the mistake of barking at the workers at Mayor James Cook's grain elevator. You'd probably expect Cook to call animal control, or else just chase the little dog away. Instead, he whacked it a few times with a shovel, killing it.

◆ Boca Raton, Florida, already bars police and firefighters from smoking, on the job and off it. Now it wants to extend the ban to its entire 1,100-strong city labor force. Workers caught smoking, even in their own homes, would be fired.

◆ Things could be worse there, though. Athens, Georgia, is reportedly mulling a ban on hiring workers with high cholesterol.

◆ In Waukesha County, Wisconsin, police suspected that some teenagers were serving alcohol at a party. But the cops didn't have a warrant, and the teens wouldn't let them in to confirm their suspicions. Now District Attorney Paul Bucher has told the police to forget such legal niceties: If they suspect underage drinking, they should go right in.

such laws, and racial discrimination in housing markets—"would produce concentrated minority-group poverty in large cities even if sprawl did not exist."

Spilled Soy

By Jeff A. Taylor

Few lobbies are as powerful as the dairy industry. Inside Washington, the subsidies keep flowing to it. Outside in the marketplace, milk is portrayed as vital to good health, even hipness. And nothing will be allowed to encroach on that.

The National Milk Producers Federation has filed a complaint with the Food and Drug Administration seeking a ban on the use of the word "milk" by soybean beverage makers. "Soy-based beverages are attempting to directly compete with dairy products and are inappropriately taking advantage of the familiarity and positive image of dairy terminology in their labeling," explained Rob Byrne, the federation's vice president of regulatory affairs.

But it would be a very confused consumer who mistakes soy drinks for cow's milk. Even the handful of soy products which use the word *milk* still feature the word *soy* prominently—at least as prominently, if not more so, than the butter in buttermilk. Besides, soy's appeal rests on stressing how *different* it is from dairy products —no lactose, no milk fat, etc. Its market consists of customers who want a dairy-free alternative.

The milk lobby's odd complaint suggests that it fears that more consumers will choose soy as it competes —gasp—with moo juice.

Why that private choice should concern the FDA is not at all clear. Then again, this is the FDA.

Rescuing *Baywatch*

By Mariel Garza

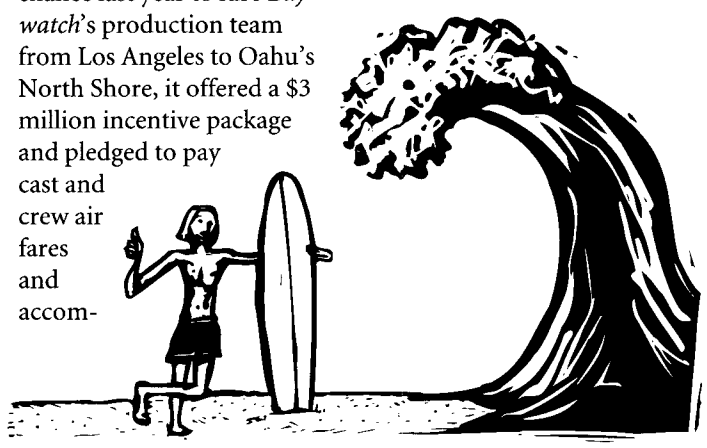
Pity poor Hawaii. It sits alone in the great Pacific, so far from the mainland and, more important, from Hollywood and big production fees. Despite its exotic scenery and the onetime popularity of such shows as *Hawaii Five-0* and *Magnum P.I.*, the island state isn't a huge draw for film and TV units. Why drag your equipment, stars, and production crew 3,000 miles across the Pacific to a place known for its high costs when you can dress up a nearby California beach on the cheap?

So when the state had a chance last year to lure *Baywatch*'s production team from Los Angeles to Oahu's North Shore, it offered a $3 million incentive package and pledged to pay cast and crew air fares and accommodations on top of that. Despite a similar offer from Australia, *Baywatch* decided to go Hawaiian.

What did Hawaii get out of the deal, besides some outside investment (estimated at $20 million per year) and a chance to spot celebrities around town? For one thing, the flesh-fest changed its name to *Baywatch Hawaii*, thus plugging the 50th state to 100 million viewers worldwide. The show also promised to hire and train local production workers.

State Rep. Mark Takai (D-Oahu) liked the arrangement so much that he introduced a bill in January to create a Hawaii television production committee, with a budget of as much as $5 million, to "assist the production of television programs to ultimately promote Hawaii to the world." The committee will hand out grants and loans both to local TV and film productions and to those from the mainland interested in a change of venue. (USA network's *Pacific Blue* is reportedly interested in moving to Hawaii.)

As lawmakers wrangled over the bill, *Baywatch* asked the state for another handout, claiming that a budget deficit might otherwise keep the show from shooting its second Hawaii season. When that hit the news, the local



media gave Takai's proposal a nickname: the *Baywatch* Bailout Bill.

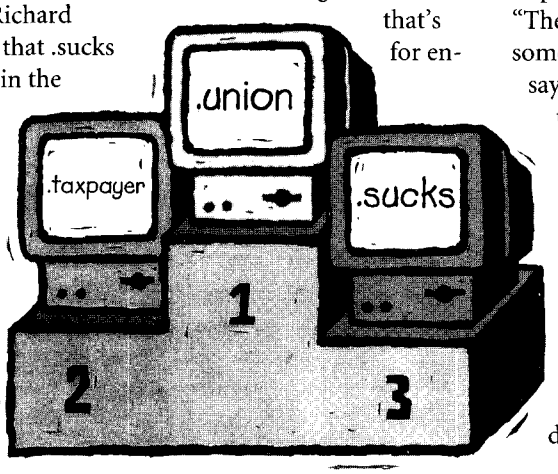
Masters of Their Domains

By Jesse Walker

American Web addresses invariably end with one of five suffixes: .com, .org, .net, .gov, or .edu. This summer, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers—the global body that distributes domain names—may lengthen that list. Along with the predictable demands for .biz, .shop, .web, and the like, there have been more provocative suggestions.

In March, John Richard of Essential Information and James Love of the Consumer Project on Technology, both Nader-affiliated organizations, proposed 10 new top-level domains. Among them: .union ("a 'union label' for cyberspace"), .taxpayer (for "taxpayer organizations that would monitor budgets and management practices of governments"), and .sucks. The latter would "facilitate criticism of a firm or organization, such as aol.sucks, wipo.sucks, or even greenpeace.sucks....The domain would also be available for other uses, such as work.sucks, life.sucks or television.sucks." Richard and Love also note that .sucks might "be popular in the marketplace." Whether they're referring to Hoover or to *Hustler* isn't clear.

The list, alas, is limited by its authors' ideology. They propose a domain for "church groups who organize shareholder suits on issues of conscience," but none for church groups who picket abortion clinics; there is a .ecology, but no .wiseuse. (The proposal does include a .isnotgreen, but that's for environmentalists who want to criticize corporations, not for anti-enviros who'd wear it proudly.) Still, it's easy to extend the idea in further directions, and Love actually hopes that will happen. "These were designed to be somewhat provocative," he says. "We wanted to show that this isn't just a technical decision. You can do more than just have 30 more ways to say .com."



Love also hopes that with more top-level domains available, there will be more room to experiment with ways of distributing names. One domain might hand out Web addresses on a first-come, first-served basis; others might use more complicated rules to discern who deserves a particular word. "I don't like the monoculture approach, where you pick the 'one best way' and impose it on everyone else," Love explains. "If there's thousands of top-level domains, there's room for different approaches."

Soft Spot

By Jacob Sullum

Even before it came out, a drug policy report from ▶

DATA

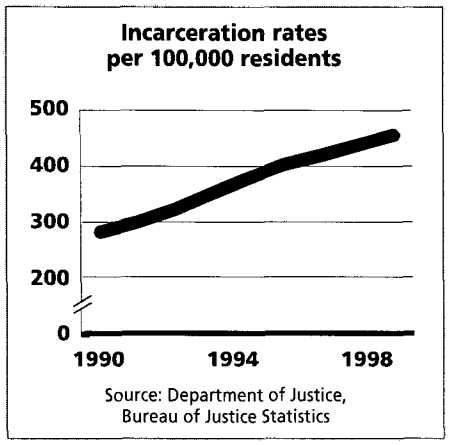
Doing Time

By Michael W. Lynch

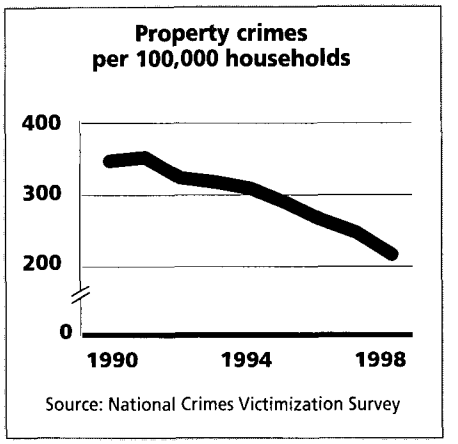
At the end of 1998, America's state and federal prisons were overstuffed with more than 1.3 million inmates, up from 774,000 in 1990. Another 592,000 were sitting in local jails either awaiting trial or serving a sentence of less than a year.

The boom is due to an increase in the rate at which Americans are locked up. There were large variations among jurisdictions and demographic groups, with incarceration rates highest in the South and, perhaps not coincidentally, among blacks. Lock-up rates were highest in the District of Columbia (1,913 per 100,000 residents); Louisiana (736 per 100,000); and George W. Bush's Texas (724 per 100,000). Men were incarcerated at a rate of 888 per 100,000, while women served time at a rate of 57 per 100,000 (one gender gap you don't hear much about).

Crime rates fell over the same period. In 1990, 349 property crimes were reported per 100,000 households, a figure that had dropped to 217 in 1998. The incapacitation effect, say criminologists, explains the divergent trends: People in prison can't commit more crimes while locked up and therefore crime rates drop as prisons fill up. However, as stories of police scandals and DNA testing exonerating Death Row inmates fill the news, it seems that at least part of that peace has been paid for by innocent people.



Source: Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics



Source: National Crimes Victimization Survey

BRICKBATS

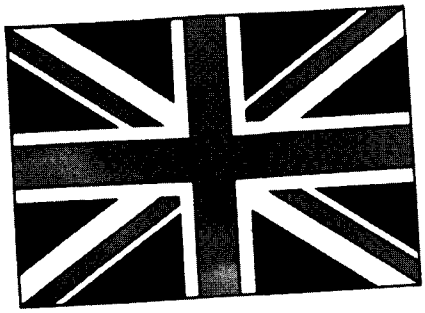
◆ Craig Paternoster, a sophomore at Pennsylvania's Meyers High School, was suspended for three weeks after he wouldn't stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. That might seem to violate the Supreme Court's 1943 decision saying students can't be punished for refusing to recite the pledge. Not so, says the school: We didn't suspend him because he wouldn't pledge allegiance to the flag. We suspended him because he wouldn't write an essay explaining his decision.

◆ Who says the Gulf War was fought just over oil? Liberated Kuwait wants to wipe out parties attended by unmarried men and women. The government has ordered restaurants and clubs to help police enforce the ban by removing the doors from their private dining rooms. More than 150 women have been arrested so far.

◆ In Fort Myers, Florida, Sheriff John McDougall has been using his official Web site to attack Planned Parenthood, gays, atheists, feminists, music videos, and the ACLU. He flavors his assaults with chestnuts like this: "To our disgrace as a nation we have caved in to the wishes of the depraved." The lawman defends his site, arguing that it's a form of crime prevention. McDougall isn't new to controversy. When Ice T released the song "Cop Killer," he tried to have the rapper charged with sedition.

—Charles Oliver

the Police Foundation, a think tank funded partly by the British government, was making politicians squirm. Released in late March, the report recommends downgrading the legal status of LSD and MDMA (a.k.a. Ecstasy) and eliminating jail time for marijuana offenses.



The authors, who include law enforcement officials as well as academics, call this policy "depenalization"—not "decriminalization," which apparently has too radical a sound to it. Clare Short, currently Britain's secretary for overseas development, was harshly criticized several years ago when she used the latter word, and now only Charles Kennedy, leader of the Liberal Democrats, is still tossing it around.

In February, British drug czar Keith Hellawell declared himself firmly against "legalization, decriminalization, or depenalization." But he added: "We need to discriminate between different drugs and the relative harm caused. ...The focus is going to be on the drugs that cause the major harm." According to *The Observer*, "this means that cannabis use and even the recreational use of Ecstasy and amphetamines is a low priority."

Hellawell got backup from his boss, Cabinet Office Minister Mo Mowlam, who admitted in January that she had smoked pot as a graduate student. Asked about the possibility of changing the marijuana laws, she said, "I never cancel anything in or anything out, but at the moment there are no plans or intentions so to do."

Even that was too much for Prime Minister Tony Blair, who seems determined not to let the Conservatives portray him as soft on drugs. He arranged a meeting with two leading anti-drug campaigners to reassure them that his government wouldn't listen to what the Police Foundation had to say. But according to subsequent reports in the British press, Blair is prepared to approve the medical use of marijuana, so long as Mowlam gives up the idea of going further.

Code Breakers

By Charles Paul Freund

Cabalists, Jewish and Christian, have had the Book of Splendor to ponder since the 13th century, and the truly wise among them have said that it is a work of such wisdom that nothing can be understood of it at all. They have used such hermeneutical tools as *gematria*, by which the words of scripture are converted into numbers and the secrets of the divine are revealed to those who can see them. They have used formulae, tradition, and exegesis to guide them on their search for the hidden and the holy. What they didn't have was equidistant letter sequence (ELS) technology, computer-based calculations capable of finding patterns of equally spaced letters.

☛ "If you are a big businessman, don't waste your time reading this article. If your yearly losses run into the hundreds of millions of dollars, and if you and your management team are sufficiently incompetent, your survival is assured: Washington, if it hasn't already done so, will bail you out and keep bailing you out."

—Eugene Guccione, "Business Survival in the 1970's"

☛ "If you are going to use gold as money, people have to dig gold out of earth in one part of the world in order to bury it under the earth somewhere else. There is a strong incentive for people to try to avoid that process, and that's why they add fiduciary elements. That's why all gold standards deteriorate into credit standards, and that's why you can't really have an honest-to-God gold standard."

—Milton Friedman, "The Role & Value of Gold"

☛ "Ken Russell's production of *Tommy* is an appalling example of what can happen when a filmmaker encounters a medium he does not understand. His destruction of one of the great works of rock music can only be compared to Mike Nichols' savaging four years ago of *Catch-22*; and why The Who allowed him to get away with it, I can't imagine."

—Charles F. Barr, "Movies"

SOUNDBITE

I Think ICANN

By Jeff A. Taylor

Given its pace, the history of the Internet has to be written as it unfolds. Wait too long and what once seemed like important technical issues become as quaint as the relative merits of various cuneiform styli.

For Syracuse University's Milton Mueller, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is too important not to have a bio, starting now. For much of the 1990s, a government contractor, Network Solutions Inc., assigned Internet domain names ending in .com, .net, and .org. Then as now, registrants paid for the domain names, which they must renew periodically. In 1998, amid squabbles over fees, the U.S. Commerce Department chartered ICANN as a non-governmental nonprofit to oversee the task. The goal was the worthy one of "industry self-regulation."

In the December 1999 issue of *Info*, Mueller argues that ICANN has been a failure that has only increased government oversight of the Net. Most important, he says, ICANN never created a real system of property rights for domain names, one in which registrants would actually own their domain names outright, rather than effectively lease them.

Reason Express writer Jeff A. Taylor spoke to Mueller recently by phone.

Q: You write that "the 'self-regulatory regime' being constructed by ICANN is actually far more centralized and controlling in nature than the pre-ICANN Internet," with the Commerce Department announcing "its intention to retain 'policy authority'" over domain names indefinitely. A pretty bleak outcome for a process that was supposed to get the government out of the picture and let markets work. What went wrong?

A: If the Commerce Department had conceived of [the switch from Network Solutions to ICANN] as a true privatization, with the government transferring assets from itself to the private sector, it should have created a property rights structure that would've allowed private players to compete. What it did instead was simply transfer government's role to an organization that it called 'private.'

Q: The ICANN saga involves a very basic control over an entire new medium of communication and business: Who gets what domain name. How important is that?

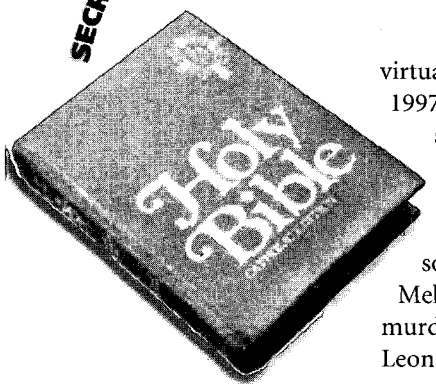
A: Given the way they are handling domain names and trademark issues, there is a lot at stake. The process that created ICANN had a huge input from groups like WIPO [the World Intellectual Property Organization, a quasi-governmental body created by international treaty]. It would have been better to let ICANN simply handle the technical specifications for the Internet and let the courts handle cases involving trademark disputes and similar issues. Then there would've been a lot less at stake. What you have now is an international regime of trademark protection at the very core of how the Internet functions.

In 1994, they got ELS. That year, researchers announced in the journal *Statistical Science* that a computer search of Genesis revealed many famous rabbinical names "hidden" in the text, along with the dates of each rabbi's birth or death. Three years later, Michael Drosnin's best-selling *The Bible Code* asserted that Hebrew scripture contained forecasts of innumerable historical and future events, including wars, assassinations, and earthquakes. Drosnin's book inspired a wave of media coverage, copycat books, bible software, and at least one movie (*The Omega Code*).

Last fall, however, another group of researchers announced in *Statistical Science* that Leo Tolstoy had apparently left us similarly encrypted messages: An ELS search of *War and Peace* in Hebrew also yielded prophetic results. (The application of ELS to variant biblical Hebrew texts, by contrast, yielded no results.)

These findings received far less publicity than Brosnin's book did. Indeed, mathematician Brendan McKay, the lead author of last fall's skeptical study, has been actively debunking *Bible Code* notions for years, with virtually no publicity. Back in 1997, Drosnin responded to skeptics by challenging them to find assassination predictions in *Moby Dick*. McKay soon determined that Melville had foreseen the murders of Indira Gandhi, Leon Trotsky, Martin Luther King, and Robert F. Kennedy. (His findings are available at cs.anu.edu.au/~bdm/dilugim/moby.html.)

SECRET NUMBER ONE: HE WHO . . .



Both Drosnin and some of the authors of the original 1994 statistical article claim that the skeptics have misconstrued their methods and conclusions. But an argument over the meaning and method of hermeneutical insight sounds rather like the inner history of cabalism. Perhaps that is why the initiated cabalist, on encountering a work reputed to be of transcendent truth, may conclude that it passeth understanding. ®

Walk on By

In which our man in Washington contemplates campaign finances, holy cows, and raw sewage

By Michael W. Lynch

Date: 3/7/2000, 11:27:30 a.m.
From: mwlynch@reason.com
Subj: Granny D in DC

Surrounded by TV cameras and followed by hundreds of placard-waving fans, 90-year-old Doris "Granny D" Haddock pounded out the last few miles of her 3,200-mile walk across the United States. Undoubtedly the only person ever inspired by a Bill Bradley speech, Granny D had decided that something needed to be done about campaign finance after walking 60 miles to hear Bradley speak in New Hampshire in 1997. She tailed the 1999 Rose Bowl parade out in Pasadena and has just kept on a-walkin'. She's averaged 10 miles each day she walked; she's worn through four pairs of sneakers and four straw hats; she celebrated her 89th and 90th birthdays on the road; and she has achieved an optimal tan. All in the hopes of securing public funding of elections.

It's been no Sunday stroll, however. She spent four days hydrating in a hospital as the result of her trek across the Mojave Desert. At times, she was urged to quit, or at least take a ride across the desert. But she kept going and going, the Energizer Bunny of a really stupid idea. (We spend our whole lives being screwed by pols; now we should pay for their campaigns?) This was her moment of triumph. Common Cause, the left-wing lobby backing her, was passing out signs, "End Soft $ Now" and "End Legalized Bribery." Someone was in a full-body cat costume, cigar stuck in its mouth. A fat man wrapped in a sheet blew his bugle and banged his bongo.

That there was a crowd surprised me. I figured Granny D would draw about as many folks as a rally for the American Nazi Party: She's a loon and no one really cares about campaign finance, except John McCain, Russ Feingold, and Ralph Nader. Yet assembled were people ranging from the very young to very old and the very white to the even whiter. They earnestly believe that the only reason why the United States isn't Sweden is because moneyed interests corrupt politicians. And boy do they long for Sweden.

Granny D wannabes were everywhere. A phalanx of nine grandmas wearing straw sun hats sang a customized version of "Glory Glory Hallelujah" while being followed closely by a commensurate number of empty wheelchairs. Occasionally, Granny D would stop and utter some words. At the Lincoln Memorial, she quoted the Great Emancipator's calls for a government "of the people, by the people, for the people," a sovereignty, she says, that requires public financing of elections. Another speaker, looking out over the crowd, exclaimed, "You can't have a mass movement without the masses. I see Granny D as a kind of Johnny Appleseed." I see her more as an aged Forrest Gump.

"It's the moral issue of our time," said Cliff Arnebeck. "We've let our system be corrupted by money."

Granny D had descended from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and Cliff and I conversed as we followed her past the reflecting pool. Cliff is a frustrated politician who can't find a political home or a winning strategy. In 1990, he ran for an Ohio congressional seat as a Republican. He lost. In 1992, he supported Perot and the Reform Party. Perot lost. In 1996, Cliff ran for Congress as a Democrat. He lost. He was outspent each time. He lost each time. It was the money, he suggests.

I caught up with 74-year-old Mary Morgan, also from Ohio. She'd walked with Granny D for 45 miles in the Buckeye State and is sure that all politicians, including Sen. McCain, are "bought and paid for." She wants full public financing of elections. This, I gather, would give us better politicians, who would give us better public services, like Amtrak, which transported Ms. Morgan to D.C. Less than a day's drive, it took the train 40 hours, she confides. The choo-choo ran out of traction and sat spinning its wheels on an uphill grade over the Alleghenies.

I interviewed the pre-Depends set as well. Turns out that the economics class of a Maryland high school used Granny D's arrival as an excuse to ditch school. The teacher told them that campaign finance reform is about economics, although none of the three high school seniors I interviewed quite knew how the two issues related. I asked one college-bound senior what was wrong with soft money. "Unless you know people, you can't run for president," he offered. But why should they care? They had all day to play in D.C.

Which is about how I felt. Granny D marched up 17th Street NW. I took a left at Pennsylvania Avenue and headed back to my office.

Date: 3/7/2000, 4:23:32 p.m.
From: mwlynch@reason.com
Subj: Back to India

"I agree with the Hindus that cows are

JERRY P. YIP

sacred," said Chrissie Hynde, the Pretenders' frontwoman. Hynde, clad in a non-bovine black trench coat, black cowboy hat, and, most important, synthetic shoes, was standing in front of Georgetown's Gap franchise.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' president followed some cows around India and didn't like the way they were treated. PETA decided to target the Gap, one of many stores whose leather products have an Indian origin, because it's a national chain, sells in great volume, and would be able to discontinue leather without much fuss, said Kimberly Gillie Krier, a rubber-shoed PETA representative, in a pre-protest chat.

I had always figured that if I were to come back as a cow, I'd want to come back as an Indian cow. They're a bit thin (it's hardly surprising that the hide is worth 10 times the meat, if Krier's right), but they are worshiped and get the run of the joint for most of their lives. Sort of like D.C. pols, except for the thin part.

But it seems as if cows are taking it on the chin these days in India. Standing in front of posters of chafed cow asses and signs exclaiming, "Don't Have a Cow, Man!" and "Shed Your Skin," a soft-spoken Hynde explained what Indian cows go through so that Westerners can buy cheap leather. Due to our vanity, she said, there's a robust black market in cowhides in India. People are selling their pet cows, which are sent on 100-mile death marches to slaughterhouses. (Chrissie didn't mention if they took the opportunity, á la Granny D, to shill for campaign finance while they walked.) If the exhausted cows stop, they get cayenne powder rubbed in their eyes, and they're kicked along their trail of tears. (Now I know what stores really mean by "distressed leather.") Such cows come to us in the form of leather jackets, shoes, and handbags.

I asked Hynde if she'd have a problem if the Gap's leather were made from American cows. The 30-year vegetarian pursed her lips and said she'd prefer they didn't make them at all. I later asked if she thought there was a connection between being a society that worshiped an animal and being so cruel to it. She said the illicit slaughterhouses (32,000 illegal ones to 3,000 legal ones) caused ordinary Indians a great deal of anguish. Priests chant round the clock outside some of them.

Do you feel bad about your leather goods? If so, do what Chrissie did and walk into a Gap and return your jacket, assuming you purchased it there. Try it even if you didn't. I followed Chrissie into the Gap and can assure you that there are no hard feelings over returns. She'd already returned cow coats in Chicago, Vancouver, Toronto, and Boston and she'd always found the clerks accommodating. She even recommends the store, confessing that it's the source of all her husband's T-shirts. "I do wish they would change their policy," mused Chrissie, who would be thrown in jail a few days later for pulling a similar stunt in Rudy Giuliani's New York. "I'm running out of places to get my cool fashions."

Cows in India are thin, but are worshipped and get the run of the joint. Sort of like D.C. pols, except for the thin part.

Date: 3/23/2000, 6:11:59 p.m.
From: mwlynch@reason.com
Subj: A Message from the Mayor

"Sounds pretty grim," responded New Haven Mayor John DeStefano Jr. to a constituent who said she had raw sewage and rats in the basement of her house. Other than that, though, said the resident, her family absolutely *loves* New Haven.

If national pols make you want to puke, you ought to try stomaching the locals. (I was in town because I live here part of the month, the lovely wife having snagged a faculty post at Yale, a local college often confused with a lock company.) Mayor DeStefano was speaking at the school this afternoon.

"People focus on New Haven when we talk about New Haven," he explained as he fired up his PowerPoint slides. He wanted to "talk about New Haven because that says a lot about New Haven." But he also wanted to talk about New Haven by focusing on the suburbs—which happen to be whiter, less densely populated, and more likely to be home to people with jobs. "If we were like other American cities we'd be large," he said, a graphic of New Haven compared to Scottsdale, Arizona, on the projection screen. "Jobs and taxes are a problem for us." Like they aren't problems for the rest of us.

He spoke of the city like it's his, which perhaps it is, at least the part that Yale doesn't own: "I got 50,000 units of housing, 20,000 single-family housing." He then rattled off a bunch of statistics, sort of a list of excuses. Fifty-seven percent of New Haven's kids qualify for free lunch; one-third of housing units are directly subsidized by government; 27 percent of kids made the mistake of choosing parents who don't speak English. He confused sociologist William Julius Wilson with basketball's Dr. J, referencing "William Julius Erving's *When Work Disappears.*"

Just like the family with rats and sewage in the basement, I actually like New Haven, especially after spending some time in Camden, New Jersey (see "Eminent Domain & the GOP National Convention," page 36). New Haven has three good restaurants and a cigar shop where they actually let you smoke.

So I asked hizzoner to say something positive about the town and to tell me why I should buy a house there instead of in the suburbs. His response: I'd know my neighbors, I could walk to the grocery store and to my children's schools, and I would have a greater sense of community. It all sounded pretty good to me. I only wondered why he hadn't put any of that on a PowerPoint slide.

Thomas W. Hazlett

Passages

Eleven years that shook the world

H.L. Mencken posited that 10 years was long enough for any one job. I have violated that rule only on the rarest of occasions—remember that each infraction requires more than a decade of consistent work. But, with this final column, I will correct one such violation. After 11 years—119 columns—this is *adieu.*

When I began musing for REASON in October 1989, the Berlin Wall stood tall and you hadn't heard of Microsoft or Cisco. The conventional wisdom was that the modest economic successes of capitalism were offset, more or less, by its sociocultural poverty. Textbooks by Nobel Laureates predicted that the Soviet system would perform and prosper for decades to come. Pick your poison: the floppy-eared Big Government, with its cradle-to-grave cuddles, or the shiny jet-smooth power thrust of Big Business—opulence at the cost of justice, beauty, and (for those on Wall Street) your immortal soul.

The intellectuals set the odds in the Great Struggle of the 20th Century at even-up. Esteemed gurus failed to note that the Iron Curtain blocked traffic in only one direction. The flow of desperate people—masses of the poor, clutching only their dreams—excited few of those fashionably decked out in the interior section of the market economy. Instead, the wise men groused about corporate takeovers and produced epic cinema exposing the greedy irrelevance of the Reagan years. It was blockbuster stuff, and spiritually fulfilling.

Without a cheering section, there was no need for competitive economic forces to grandstand. They didn't. Instead, they proved their mettle in magical feats of technological transformation. Then they made tyrants disappear. Today's globe glows a rich hue from enterprise overturning doctrines of control.

In the 1990s dictators fell like dominoes. When economic competition with the West proved too much, the enlightened but nearsighted Gorbachev eased up. The mere loosening of authoritarian controls unleashed events that proved impossible to stop. The Soviet system—victim of a record-setting 70 consecutive bad weather harvests—retreated, sputtered, and splat. Five Year Plan no more.

The East Bloc satellites fell even before the Kremlin; when the tiniest cracks opened, humanity rushed through. Around the world, the common folk took their cue. In 1990, the peasants of Nicaragua voted out the Sandinistas—nice try, but The People weren't buying The Revolution. They lusted to be Chilean marketeers. The Chileans, for their part, quickly got rich under open markets, and then shrugged off Gen. Pinochet like a bad hangover. They embraced the marketplace in goods and ideas—so much so, they have now voted in a Socialist.

Without flacks, spinners, or even a vice president of sales, the triumph of the market is as natural as a volcanic eruption.

In a series of events, 1989–92, the Nationalist Government in Pretoria saw the Soviet threat dissipate, as did the African National Congress. With the issue of world domination decided, either side compromised their way to democratic reforms. Nelson Mandela went from 27 years in prison to six as president, and both the Nationalists and the ANC—each ideologically committed to socialism of one variance or another—have grown beyond their predilections.

But here's the funny thing about the end of history: The lack of serious disagreement on the superiority of economic freedom has not swept the policy slate clean. Champions of the Third Way, the Welfare State, or the Mixed Economy have adjusted to changing times. The political market sponsors its own tests of creative destruction, and the survivors are a hardy bunch. They engage in ad hoc governmentalism, forging an electoral demand for new programs without seeming to upset the market economy. Craftsman of back-door incrementalism they attempt to beef up the state by clever use of levers. The era of Big Government is over, they say, but pat them down at the door.

Alas, the opportunists are playing on someone else's turf. The epic belongs to the beast of capitalism, roaring with the thrill of tumult. The long-awaited efficiencies of the communications revolution are swelling growth rates and fueling wealth. Seven million millionaires now dot the American tax rolls. Fifty million are projected by 2020. The wildest imaginations today puff a dot.com IPO. The career paths of our top youth converge in bustling bazaars where virtual continents are concocted, wired, and set streaming to the benefit of mankind. Empowered by commerce, the silent speak and the riff-raff gain admission to the club.

Without flacks, spinners, or even a vice president of sales, the triumph of the market is as natural as a volcanic eruption. It has made the government class smile—after all, they're sort of on commission—and yet quiver, too. How might they tap into power without paying homage to this wellspring? Only by leading the dual life of the serial incrementalist, touting the Grand Program while leaning on free minds and free markets to get the job done. ◆

Contributing Editor Thomas W. Hazlett (hazlett@primal.ucdavis.edu) teaches economics and public policy at the University of California, Davis, and is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He will continue his column and post other writings, at SelectedSkirmishes.com.

SOME OF THE 2000 REASONS WHY YOU NEED NR IN 2000

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ELECTION-YEAR BALANCE

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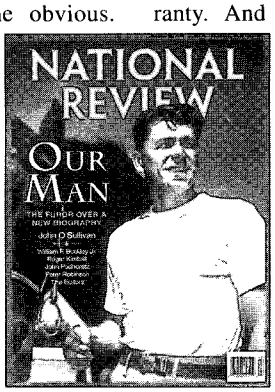

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Every so often someone in Hollywood uses his power to break the movie colony's rules.

Consider this year's *Total Eclipse.* Odd as it may seem, this is the first serious American film set against the background of the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact, the deal that allied Europe's two totalitarian powers against the West and helped plunge the world into war. With an ally on the eastern front, Hitler sent his Panzers west while Stalin helped himself to the Baltic states and invaded Finland. A film like this could easily have turned out as big a didactic dud as the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's 1982 bomb, *Inchon,* with Laurence Olivier as Gen.

JANET HAMLIN

By Kenneth Lloyd Billingsley

Douglas MacArthur. But this time the verisimilitude of the script, carried by some outstanding performances, is the source of the film's dramatic power.

Dustin Hoffman's persuasive portrayal of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin obviously emerges from his close study of how power and perversity converged in the dictator. Likewise, Jurgen Prochnow sparkles as Hitler's foreign minister, Joachim Von Ribbentrop, and so does Robert Duvall as Vyacheslav Molotov, his Soviet counterpart. Duvall's delivery of Molotov's line that "fascism is a matter of taste" is a key moment, and deserves at least as much admiration as Duvall's famous quip from *Apocalypse Now* about the smell of napalm in the morning. The Molotov speech has drawn some objections for being over the top, but it was not invented by screenwriter William Goldman (*Marathon Man*); it's an actual quote.

The simple but startling truth is that the major conflict of our time—what *The New York Times* recently called "the holy war of the 20th century"—is almost entirely missing from American cinema.

The sheer unexpectedness of the film is almost as shocking as its content. In one of the film's more chilling sequences, the Soviets hand over a number of German Communists, Jews who had taken refuge in Moscow, to the Gestapo. Modern audiences may find this surprising, but that incident too is taken from the historical record. Indeed, former KGB officials are credited as advisers on the film, whose cast also includes some of their actual victims.

There has simply been nothing like it on the screen in six decades. It has taken that long for moviegoers to see Soviet forces invading Poland and meeting their Nazi counterparts. Audiences would likely be similarly surprised by cinematic treatments of Cuban prisons, the Khmer Rouge genocide, and the bloody campaigns of Ethiopia's Stalinist Col. Mengistu, all still awaiting attention from Hollywood.

Total Eclipse is rated PG-13 for violence, particularly graphic in some of the mass murder scenes, images of starving infants from Stalin's 1932 forced famine in the Ukraine, and the torture of dissidents. Director Steven Spielberg (*Schindler's List*) deftly cuts from the Moscow trials to the torture chambers of the Lubyanka. More controversial are the portrayals of American communists during the period of the Pact. They are shown here picketing the White House, calling President Roosevelt a warmonger, and demanding that America stay out of the "capitalist war" in Europe. Harvey Keitel turns in a powerful performance as American Communist boss Earl Browder, and Linda Hunt brings depth to Lillian Hellman, who, when Hitler attacks the USSR in September of 1939, actually did cry out, "The motherland has been invaded."

Painstakingly accurate and filled with historical surprises, this film is so refreshing, so remarkable, that even at 162 minutes it seems too short.

Never heard of *Total Eclipse*? It hasn't been produced or even written. In all likelihood, such a film has never even been contemplated, at least in Hollywood. Indeed, in the decade since the Berlin Wall fell, or even the decade before that, no Hollywood film has addressed the actual history of communism, the agony of the millions whose lives were poisoned by it, and the century of international deceit that obscured communist reality. The simple but startling truth is that the major conflict of our time, democracy versus Marxist-Leninist totalitarianism—what *The New York Times* recently called "the holy war of the 20th century"—is almost entirely missing from American cinema. It is as though since 1945, Hollywood had produced little or nothing about the victory of the Allies and the crimes of National Socialism. This void is all the stranger since the major conflict of our time would seem to be a natural draw for Hollywood.

Though of global dimension, the conflict encompasses millions of dramatic personal stories played out on a grand tapestry of history: courageous Solidarity unionists against a Communist military junta; teenagers facing down tanks in the streets of Budapest and Prague; Cuban gays oppressed by a macho-Marxist dictatorship; writers and artists resisting the kitsch of obscurantist materialism; families fleeing brutal persecution, risking their lives to find freedom.

Furthermore, great villains make for great drama, and communism's central casting department is crowded: Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Hönecker, Ceaucescu, Pol Pot, Col. Mengistu—all of cosmic megalomania—along with their squads of hacks, sycophants, and stooges, foreign and domestic.

A few English-language films have drawn on this remarkable material, especially book-into-film projects based on highly publicized works, among them *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (a 1971 British-Norwegian production) and, of course, *Doctor Zhivago* (1965). But many other natural book-to-film projects remain untouched, from the story of Stalin's daughter Svetlana (who left Russia for the West) to works by such high-ranking defectors as Polish Ambassador Romuald Spasowski (*The Liberation of One*), KGB agent Arkady

Schevchenko (*Breaking With Moscow*), and persecuted Cuban poets Armando Valladares (*Against All Hope*) and Heberto Padilla (*Heroes Are Grazing in My Garden*). In light of the most recent revelations concerning the espionage of Alger Hiss, Whittaker Chambers' *Witness* is another obvious candidate.

The reason this ample supply of stories remains unfilmed is not ignorance. Though its films may not often reflect it, Hollywood is filled with knowledgeable writers and producers. The reasons lie elsewhere, especially in Hollywood's own convoluted political history, a history that has passed through many stages. Perhaps the most pertinent of those stages involves the "back story" of communism's own largely uncharted offensive in the studios.

The cinema's great potential for persuasion excited Stalin and his wholly-owned American subsidiary, the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA), which lived off Soviet cash until it criticized Gorbachev's reforms as "old social democratic thinking class collaboration." Correspondence between American communists and their Soviet bosses can now be perused in *The Soviet World of American Communism* (1998). Editors John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and Kyrill Anderson gathered newly declassified material from the Moscow-based archives of the Communist International (Comintern), the Soviet organization that controlled national communist parties. Members of the CPUSA made some documentary films in the 1930s, but nothing that could compete with the American commercial cinema, which the party set out to co-opt.

"One of the most pressing tasks confronting the Communist Party in the field of propaganda," wrote the indefatigable Comintern agent Willi Muenzenberg in a 1925 *Daily Worker* article, "is the conquest of this supremely important propaganda unit, until now the monopoly of the ruling class. We must wrest it from them and turn it against them." It was an ambitious task, but conditions would soon turn to the party's advantage.

The Depression convinced many that capitalism was on its last legs and that socialism was the wave of the future. In the days of the Popular Front of the mid-'30s, communists found it easy to make common cause with liberals against Hitler and Spain's Franco. In 1935, V.J. Jerome, the CPUSA's cultural commissar, set up a Hollywood branch of the party. This highly secretive unit enjoyed great success, recruiting members, organizing entire unions, raising money from unwitting Hollywood liberals, and using those funds to support Soviet causes through front groups such as the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League. "We had our own sly arithmetic, we could find fronts and make two become one," remembered screenwriter Walter Bernstein (*Fail Safe, The Front, The House on Carroll Street*) in his 1996 autobiography, *Inside Out.*

During the period of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, for example, actor Melvyn Douglas (*Ninotchka*) and screenwriter-director Philip Dunne (*Wild in the Country*) proposed that the Motion Picture Democratic Committee, a conclave of industry Democrats, condemn Stalin's invasion of Finland in late 1939. But the group was actually secretly dominated by Communists, and it rejected the resolution. As

***Big John McClain* (1952), *The Front* (1976)**

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Dunne later described it in his 1980 memoir, *Take Two: A Life in Movies and Politics*, "All over town the industrious communist tail wagged the lazy liberal dog."

"There was never an organized, articulate, and effective liberal or left-wing opposition to the communists in Hollywood," concluded John Cogley, a socialist, in his 1956 *Report on Blacklisting*. As his original article as "a one-sided, nondialectical treatment of complex issues" that was "distinguished for its omissions" and which "succeeded in merging my comments with the unprincipled attacks upon the left that I have always repudiated and combated." Maltz was to defend that retraction until he died in 1985.

Dalton Trumbo (*Kitty Foyle*), a Communist Party member and for a time the highest-paid

***The House on Carroll Street* (1988), *Reds* (1981)**

former party member Budd Schulberg (*On the Waterfront*) put it, the party was "the only game in town." But even though the Communists were strongest in the Screen Writers Guild, influencing the content of movies was a trickier matter.

Communist cultural doctrine cast writers as "artists in uniform," producing works whose function was to transmit political messages and raise the consciousness of their audiences. Otherwise, movies were mere bourgeois decadence, a tool of capitalist distraction, and therefore subjugation. Party bosses V.J. Jerome and John Howard Lawson (a co-founder of the Screen Writers Guild and screenwriter of *Algiers* and *Action in the North Atlantic*) enforced this art-is-a-weapon creed in Hollywood, as they had done earlier among New York dramatists. Albert Maltz (*Destination Tokyo*) was to challenge the doctrine in a 1946 *New Masses* article, arguing that doctrinaire politics often resulted in poor writing. Responding to the notion that "art is a weapon," Maltz suggested, "An artist can be a great artist without being an integrated or logical or a progressive thinker on all matters."

As a result of such heresy, the party dragged him through a series of humiliating inquisitions and forced him to publish a retraction. Maltz trashed screenwriter in town, described the screenwriting trade as "literary guerrilla warfare." The studio system, in which projects were closely supervised, made the insertion of propaganda difficult if not impossible. Hollywood did not become a bastion of Stalinist propaganda, except as part of the war effort, when Russia was celebrated as an ally. Ayn Rand, then a Hollywood screenwriter and one of the few in the movie community who had actually lived under communism, was to point out that, in their zeal to provide artistic lend-lease, American Communist screenwriters went to extraordinary and absurd lengths. In such wartime movies as *North Star* and *Song of Russia* (both 1943), they portrayed the USSR as a land of joyous, well-fed workers who loved their masters. *Mission to Moscow* (also 1943), starring Walter Huston, went so far as to whitewash Stalin's murderous show trials of the 1930s.

But if Comintern fantasies of a Soviet Hollywood were never realized, party functionaries nevertheless played a significant role: They were sometimes able to *prevent* the production of movies they opposed. The party had not only helped organize the Screen Writers Guild, it had organized the Story Analysts Guild as well. Story analysts judge scripts and film treatments early in the decision making process. A dismissive report often means that a

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studio will pass on a proposed production. The party was thus well positioned to quash scripts and treatments with anti-Soviet content, along with stories that portrayed business and religion in a favorable light. In *The Worker*, Dalton Trumbo openly bragged that the following works had not reached the screen: Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* and *The Yogi and the Commissar*; Victor Kravchenko's *I Chose Freedom*; and *Bernard Clare* by James T. Farrell, also author of *Studs Lonigan* and vilified by party enforcer Mike Gold as "a vicious, voluble Trotskyite."

Even talent agents sometimes answered to Moscow. Party organizer Robert Weber landed with the William Morris agency, where he represented Communist writers and directors such as Ring Lardner Jr. and Bernard Gordon. Weber carried considerable clout regarding who worked and who didn't. So did George Willner, a Communist agent representing screenwriters, who sold out his noncommunist clients by deliberately neglecting to shop their stories. On a wider scale, the party launched smear campaigns and blacklists against noncommunists, targeting such figures as Barbara Stanwyck, Lana Turner, and Bette Davis.

These were among the many actors defying the party-backed labor group, the Conference of Studio Unions. The CSU, which was trying to shut down the industry and force through jurisdictional concessions that would give it supremacy in studio labor, clashed with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) and its allies, who were trying to keep the studios going. Katharine Hepburn stumped for the CSU, reading speeches written by Dalton Trumbo, while Ronald Reagan, then a liberal Democrat, headed the anticommunists in the talent guilds.

These were the true front lines of the communist offensive, and bloody warfare broke out in the streets outside every studio. The prospect of communist influence in Hollywood got Washington snooping, but in classic style, the politicians got it backward.

The first head of what eventually became the House Committee on Un-American Activities was New York Democrat Samuel Dickstein. As the recently declassified "Venona" documents (decrypts of Soviet cables) reveal, Dickstein moonlighted for Soviet intelligence—not out of ideology but for money. Initially concerned with pro-fascist groups in the late 1930s, the committee after the war was dominated by right-wing Republicans, though its most loathsome figure was Mississippi Democrat John Rankin, a sulfuric anti-Semite.

In 1947, while investigating Comintern agent Gerhart Eisler, whose brother Hanns was a composer in Hollywood, the committee found movie people coming forth with stories of Communist Party intrigue and decided that there was enough to justify hearings. They selected fewer than 50 witnesses of various job descriptions and political profiles, including party heavyweights John Howard Lawson and Dalton Trumbo.

Eager to exploit Hollywood for publicity, the committee stupidly made film content the issue, ignoring the party's vast organizing campaigns in the back lots despite convincing testimony from, among others, Walt Disney. More important, the committee ignored the reality that it wasn't what the party put into *North Star* and *Song of Russia* that really mattered but the anticommunist, anti-Soviet material it kept out.

While the committee welcomed the publicity, the beleaguered film industry circled the wagons. Studio bosses, although adamantly anticommunist, asserted defiantly that no congressman could tell them how to run their business. A celebrity support group, including such figures as Humphrey Bogart and Danny Kaye, journeyed to Washington to defend their own.

The hearings featured a series of angry harangues by Stalinist writers who came to be known as the Hollywood Ten. Dalton Trumbo, who joined the party during the Nazi-Soviet Pact and even wrote a novel, *The Remarkable Andrew*, to support the Pact, bellowed, "This is the beginning of the American concentration camp."

Such performances shocked the studio bosses and the celebrity supporters, who had been expecting an eloquent constitutional defense of freedom of expression. Party membership itself was not illegal, and members could have alluded to the wartime alliance with the Soviets. Many wanted to testify, a phenomenon Norman Mailer dubbed "subpoena envy." As director John Huston (*The Maltese Falcon*), who organized the celebrity support group, later learned to his dismay, CPUSA lawyers had decided on the confrontational strategy, largely to protect enforcer John Howard Lawson and others who had already testified to a California committee that they were not communists.

After another series of hearings in the early

The blacklist story is vintage Hollywood: black hats vs. white hats. The evil government committee rides into town and, for no apparent reason, makes life miserable for a group of noble artists.

1950s, studios produced a string of now largely forgotten, mostly low-budget anti-communist films, among them *Big Jim McClain* and *My Son John*, in which Helen Hayes informs to the government on her son, Robert Walker. These dealt with communism as a kind of domestic political mafia but left actual conditions under communist regimes largely unexplored. More important was Hollywood's internal reaction.

The specter that once haunted Europe is gone, yet it still seems to hang over the palms of Southern California, an ideological smog that obscures the view for millions of filmgoers.

Studio bosses, fearful of bad publicity, announced that they would indeed fire communists, which they had previously refused to do. This was the beginning of the blacklist, Hollywood's version of the conflict of our time, enshrined in such films as *The Front* (1976), starring Woody Allen and Zero Mostel and written by Walter Bernstein, and the star-studded but bland *Guilty by Suspicion* (1991). Viewers of such fare could easily conclude that communism scarcely existed except as a source of boundless optimism in the hearts of the country's most creative writers. Much the same message emerged from *Julia*, the 1977 Jane Fonda vehicle based on an autohagiographical memoir by Lillian Hellman.

Over the years, a number of book-length accounts have taken up the cause, some written by relatives of the blacklisted, invoking "inquisition" and "red scare" in their titles and bristling with terms such as *witch-hunt* and *McCarthyite*. The senator from Wisconsin, it should be noted, played no role in Hollywood, whose anti-communists, mostly liberal Democrats, found him an impediment to their cause.

As it plays out in the movies, the blacklist story is vintage Hollywood: black hats vs. white hats. The evil government committee rides into town and, for no apparent reason, makes life miserable for a group of noble artists. In one subplot, the victims survive by selling scripts under fake names. The story carries considerable appeal, though it misses the irony that those who thought capitalism evil continued to take advantage of the kind of market that did not exist in the socialist regimes they extolled. Albert Maltz championed East Germany, while fellow Hollywood Ten alumnus Lester Cole favored that bastion of artistic freedom, North Korea.

By the 1960s the blacklist was over; Kirk Douglas and Otto Preminger restored the names of blacklisted writers to the credits of the films they actually wrote. The Hollywood Ten and other communist writers were on their way, as Philip Dunne put it, to being "virtually deified." Dunne had been through it all and found the revisionist accounts so distorted that, he said, "I could almost believe that I was reading the chronicle of some mythical kingdom."

The legend of the blacklist, sanitized of all references to Stalin or to the Communist Party's actual record in the studios, became a continuing influence on Hollywood's political life. Hollywood had entered its period of anti-anti-communism, a well-known phenomenon in American cultural and intellectual life. Those motivated by this ideology have vilified such critics of the Soviet Union as Robert Conquest and Sidney Hook, while venerating such paleo-leftists as journalist I.F. Stone, whose 1952 *Hidden History of the Korean War* parroted the party line that South Korea invaded the North. Anti-anti-communism demonizes anti-communists, however truthful their revelations, as paranoid and on the wrong side of history, while praising apologists of totalitarianism as well-meaning idealists, however mendacious and servile their record. Such a vision is not likely to promote a meaningful cinematic treatment of communism.

Witness the longstanding campaign to prevent director Elia Kazan (*On the Waterfront, East of Eden, A Streetcar Named Desire*) from receiving a lifetime achievement award from the Motion Picture Academy. Kazan, a former communist, cooperated with HUAC and defended his position in a *New York Times* advertisement that called on liberals to take a stand against communism. Since Kazan's cinematic achievements are undeniable, his career violates a significant aspect of the Hollywood Ten legend: that those who defied the committee were brilliant artists and noble idealists, while those who cooperated were vile mediocrities who could build their careers only by destroying others.

Kazan finally received his award at last year's Oscars, but amid renewed controversy over whether he should receive any applause at the event. (Abraham Polonsky [*I Can Get It for You Wholesale*], a leading Hollywood Communist who led the assault on Albert Maltz, hoped in print that Kazan would be assassinated.) But though Kazan finally received his due from Hollywood, Stalin never has.

According to Hollywood, American anti-communism derived not from any deficiencies of socialism or threat from the USSR but from paranoia, xenophobia, and the nefarious influence of Nazis who entered the United States after the war. That

was the theme of Walter Bernstein's 1988 *The House on Carroll Street*, which featured a score more appropriate for a '50s monster movie. Bernstein, incidentally, shows up in the Venona decrypts, which reveal that he was a willing collaborator with the KGB. If nothing else, such a revelation gives new meaning to the Hollywood phrase, "Have your agent call my agent."

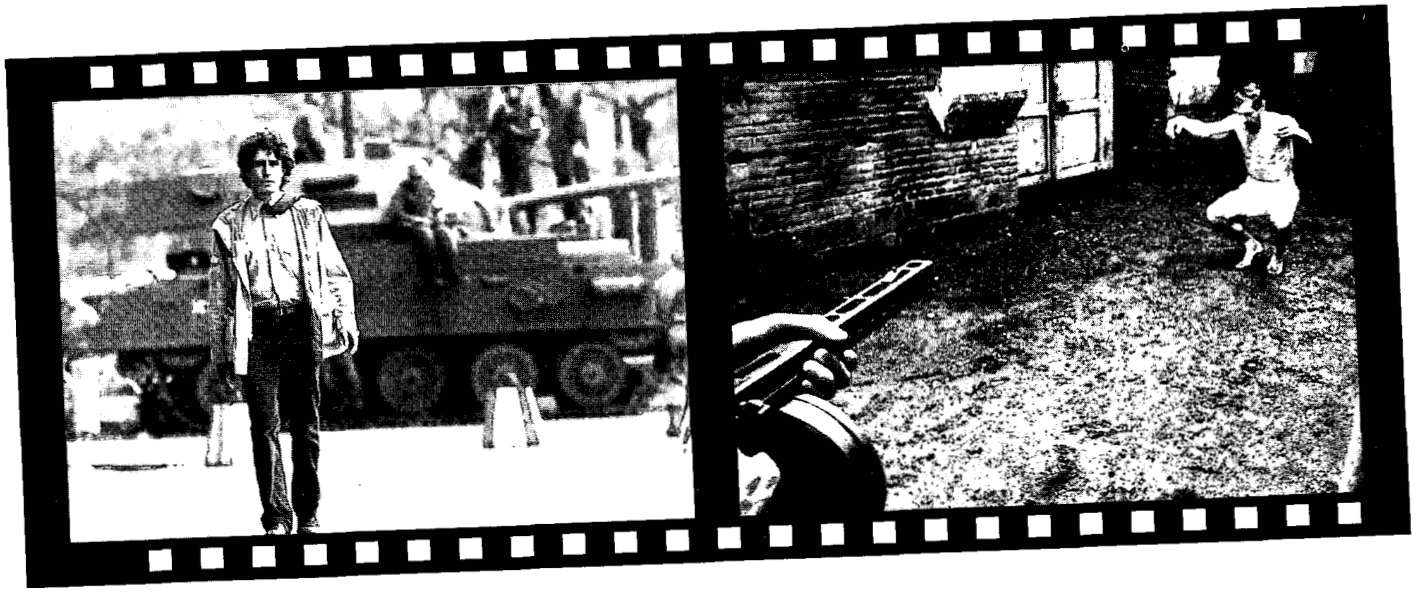
On the rare occasion when life under communism is portrayed, its characteristic brutality is virtually never actually represented. Consider, for instance, Warren Beatty's Oscar-winning *Reds* (1981), a psalm to Lenin acolyte John Reed. In that film a character concedes that the Soviet regime "violates human rights" but none of these violations appears on the screen. Likewise, audiences don't see the Khmer Rouge murdering any of their nearly 2 million victims in *The Killing Fields* (1984). Indeed, the real villains in that tragedy, we learn, are Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, and U.S. foreign policy.

A similar theme runs through *Missing* (1982), with Jack Lemmon, directed by Constantine Costa-Gavras, a man of the left who, unlike his Hollywood colleagues, is sometimes willing to address communist themes honestly. Costa-Gavras' 1970 film *The Confession* deals with the 1952 anti-Semitic show trials in Czechoslovakia that resulted in 11 executions. After hanging, the victims' bodies were incinerated; the film shows a policeman scattering their ashes on frozen roads around Prague, which was what actually happened. For Yves Montand, who played Czech Foreign Minister Artur London, *The Confession* was "a farewell to the generous sentimentality of the Left, a Left that had been blind to its own crimes and cultivates a messianic pose, proposing to bring happiness to human beings, even if it means slaughtering them."

But Hollywood has yet to show itself capable of portraying what *The Black Book of Communism*, a recent scholarly assessment of communist crimes, calls "politically correct mass slaughter." In *Eleni* (1985), John Malkovich hunts down a Greek communist responsible for the death of his mother, but much of the hostile action takes place off screen. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1988), while generally anti-communist in tone, includes only fleeting glimpses of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Odd as it may seem, one of the few Hollywood movies that does depict violence in communist countries on screen is a Disney film. The 1983 *Night Crossing* shows a daring escape from East Germany, Albert Maltz's version of the good society. Viewers see German border guards, whom John Hurt calls "pigs," gunning down those who flee. Material abounds for this type of film. Soviet Bloc archives are yielding their revelations about the Katyn Forest murders of Polish officers by Soviet forces, KGB assassination campaigns in the West, and the identity of Stalinist agents in Western governments. Vitaly Shentalinsky's 1996 book, *Arrested Voices*, documented Stalin's campaigns against writers and artists, whose victims included Itzak Feffer and Solomon Mikaels, both of whom had been showcased in Hollywood by Communists as evidence that anti-Semitism did not exist in the Soviet Union.

Films from former communist countries, the 1999 *Thief* among them, show that even the



***Missing* (1982), *The Confession* (1970)**

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Russians are coming to terms with the communist legacy. But the circus surrounding Kazan's Oscar and other recent events suggest that Hollywood probably will not follow suit. The blacklist mythography casts too long a shadow, one in which a fuller appreciation of the epic battle between communism and democracy remains in the dark. "Hollywood Remembers the Blacklist," staged at the Motion Picture Academy's theater on the 50th anniversary of the 1947 hearings, featured Billy Crystal and Kevin Spacey in dramatic roles. Also appearing were Hollywood Ten veteran Ring Lardner Jr. and fellow party member and *Song of Russia* co-writer Paul Jarrico, who compared the Hollywood Ten's performance with the stand that Jefferson took against the Alien and Sedition Act. Actress Marsha Hunt said that "for over a decade, this was no longer the land of the free, nor the home of the brave."

This event was a colorized, multimedia version of Philip Dunne's "mythical kingdom," but for the anti-anti-communist Hollywood crowd, it proved the feel-good hit of the fall. Such events pass on the myths to younger filmmakers who see themselves not just as entertainers but teachers.

For instance, Tim Robbins' *Cradle Will Rock*, released last fall, takes its title from an agitprop musical written by Marc Blitztein, a doctrinaire Stalinist. The original work was welcomed by the 1930s Federal Theater Project, a group dominated by communists, precisely because of its Soviet-inspired Socialist Realism. The progressive Works

After the Fall

Look who's examining the communist catastrophe

By Charles Paul Freund

There is considerable irony in Hollywood's failure to find subjects in the century-long grotesque of collectivism. After all, capitalist movies, along with popular music and fashion, are often cited as important factors in undermining the credibility of communist regimes among their own populations. A lively black market in VCRs and Hollywood videotapes reportedly flourished throughout the Eastern Bloc during Late Communism, with audiences gathering by the roomful for evenings of cheap thrills and consumerist fantasy; the James Bond films were said to be particular black-market favorites.

Of course, consumerism and sensationalism are precisely the elements of "mass culture" that have been decried by Western critics since the first puff of industrialist steam signaled the start of the mass-culture age. Yet while totalist regimes have found it both possible and useful to manage such elite cultural forms as classical music, ballet, and the art-house film, they have never been able to subdue the "popular" culture of an open system. As scholar Gilles Lipovetsky has noted, movies, songs, clothes, etc., are really tools of "personal" culture, because their fans use them to individual ends. Iran, which in April legalized the private possession of "corrupt" musical recordings, is the latest regime to bend under the futility of cultural suppression.

In other words, Hollywood's daily work addresses the desires and fantasies that have reshaped the West and that are now remaking the rest of the world. That the film industry cannot find a narrative about the foundation of its own wealth, power, and influence is perhaps the West's most bizarre cultural paradox.

But it is not the only one. Although the distortions of culture and the problems of daily life under communism have long been documented, such subjects did not often attract the interest of the anti-anti-communist cultural elite. That has been changing. Biography by biography, stage production by stage production, film by film, and study by study, it's the traditional elite that is finding narratives amid the wreckage of communist culture, and that is attempting to cope with a century of wasted time and ruined lives.

For example, the performance piece *The Noise of Time* by Simon McBurney, which opened in New York in March, features the work of Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich while pondering his life. Shostakovich worked during the Stalin era, and his relationship to the tyrant—and the compromises he may have been forced to make in order to survive and keep working—remain matters of debate among scholars. But one can contemplate neither the composer nor, for that matter, 20th century Russian music, without attempting to address the repression that surrounded its creation. Stalin is thus a necessary presence in the piece, if an undefined one. McBurney has included a suggestive description of the composer on the telephone, waiting for Stalin to come on the line.

A torrent of material about the cultural deformations of this era is becoming available, much of it from Russian authors who began their investigations during the *glasnost* era. Particularly engrossing is Anatoly Smeliansky's *Is Comrade Bulgakov Dead?* (1993), a study of novelist and playwright Mikhail Bulgakov, best

Progress Administration (WPA) closed down the show out of budgetary considerations, though Robbins attempts to blame it on an axis of HUAC and capitalists allied with Mussolini and Hitler. The fascist-capitalist bosses, headed by Nelson Rockefeller, raking in the dough selling goods to Hitler, are also out to get muralist Diego Rivera, played by Ruben Blades. Audiences predictably stayed away from this film, but in Hollywood, the mythology of the left remains powerful enough to see such a project through production.

Late last year, the University of Southern California, whose film school is a kind of Hollywood employment agency, unveiled a sculpture garden honoring the Hollywood Ten as victims of the Cold War and champions of the First Amendment. The mythology has become a monument, a kind of museum of anti–anti-communism in a town that welcomed Daniel Ortega of the Sandinista junta but never took up the cause of a single Soviet or Eastern European dissident. The specter that once haunted Europe is gone, yet it still seems to hang over the palms of Southern California, an ideological smog that obscures the view for millions of filmgoers.

Kenneth Lloyd Billingsley (74551.271@compuserve.com) is editorial director of the Pacific Research Institute in San Francisco and the author of Hollywood Party: How Communism Seduced the American Film Industry in the 1930s and 1940s, *now available in paperback from Prima Publishing.*

known in the West for his novel *The Master and Margarita.* Stalin allowed Bulgakov to remain at the Moscow Art Theater, but amused himself by thwarting the writer's attempts to create or stage almost anything. Another Russian author, Vitaly Shentalinsky, is currently devoting his energy to searching for the unpublished poetry and prose that was confiscated by the police and which may still exist in the vast state archives that constitute the cultural catacomb of a nation. Reconsiderations of the wrecked careers of painters, architects, filmmakers, and other creators are being published regularly, often by university presses.

Of course, there is more to this story than martyrology. A wave of biographical debunking is under way, puncturing the reputations of ideological celebrities ranging from Mao (an utterly debauched monster, according to his personal physician) to playwright Bertolt Brecht (a woman-abusing plagiarist, claims one recent biography) to the whole of France's Stalinist post-war intellectual establishment, thanks to the withering pen of American scholar Tony Judt.

Elite culture itself is being reexamined. German professor Boris Groys has argued in *The Total Art of Stalinism* (English translation, 1992), that the Russian totalist vision is in part indebted to that nation's avant-garde artists. Groys charges that the modernist conceit that art should transform life, and not merely reflect it, was one source of the catastrophe to come. Moreover, the British film scholar Richard Taylor has argued that Russia's famous art films of the 1920s were unintelligible to their intended home audiences, and that early Stalinist films were more effective because they copied Hollywood's entertainment values.

If Hollywood has been tongue-tied about life under communism, foreign directors have not. Remarkable dramas and allegories have emerged from Russia (*The Burglar*), China (*To Live, The Sent Down Girl*), ex-Yugoslavia (*When Father Was Away on Business*), and other once-communist nations examining the system's empty promises and wasted years. Indeed, China is particularly rich in prose narratives of personal tragedy, having developed an entire genre of memoir and fiction (the "literature of tears") dealing with the Cultural Revolution. A good deal of this material has been translated for an interested but small English-speaking audience. There is seemingly no end to the horror under Mao, with at least two recent studies —Zheng Yi's 1996 *Scarlet Memorial* and Jasper Becker's 1997 *Hungry Ghosts*—addressing the descent, in some regions, into periods of cannibalism.

Of course, the major reconsideration of the costs of revolution to emerge from the intellectual world is France's *Black Book of Communism,* which argues that communist hands are even bloodier than those of fascists. That such a work has come out of France is only one sign of the revisionary turmoil among that nation's intellectuals. Another is the fate in France of Eric Hobsbawm's 1996 history, *The Age of Extremes,* written from Hobsbawm's left-of-center but non-Stalinist perspective, which received praise from British and American reviewers, but languished four years before a French publisher released it.

On the other hand, the anti-anti-communism that dominated elite Western culture throughout the Cold War hasn't entirely gone away, either. Just last December, an opera titled *Defendants Rosenberg,* written by an American expatriate named Ari Benjamin Meyers, debuted in Germany. According to the German press, the work focuses on "the personal tragedy that unfolded as the Rosenbergs' lives were destroyed because of the hysterical anti-communism that ran amok in the United States in the early 1950s." Of course, no one any longer denies that Julius Rosenberg was a Soviet spy. Maybe composer Meyers should shop his libretto around Hollywood.

Charles Paul Freund is a REASON *senior editor.*

DEATH BY WR

PITTSBURGH AND THE POLITICS OF EMINENT DOMAIN

Two years ago, the city of Pittsburgh sentenced Headgear, one of the coolest hat shops in the Eastern Time Zone, to death by wrecking ball. The store's owner, Charles Lee, never received official notice of the decree. He learned about it months later, the same way 124 other doomed businesspeople did: by looking at a map of Mayor Tom Murphy's proposed redevelopment plan in the morning paper.

PHOTOS: ANNIE O'NEILL

HEADGEAR OWNER CHARLES LEE

BY BILL STEIGERWALD

ECKING BALL

To Pittsburgh's powerbrokers, Lee is just another insufficiently upscale retailer in the city's slowly dying shopping core. It doesn't matter that his store's category-killing excellence attracts customers from around the country. It doesn't matter that a hat shop has been at Headgear's address since Grover Cleveland was president. Lee and the building he leases are blocking City Hall's latest vision. Therefore, they must go.

Local officials call their plan "Market Place at Fifth and Forbes," after the two city streets it would destroy and then rebuild. They intend to tear down a gauntlet of pager shops, wig stores, discount drugstores, and homegrown retailers, and erect a $480-million-plus retail/entertainment center, with 40 high-end national retailers like J. Crew and Virgin Records, with classy restaurants, with chain nightclubs like the House of Blues, with a fancy 18-screen AMC movie theater, and with 1,000 underground parking spots. The aim is to attract suburbanites back downtown to shop and play. About $100 million of the money will come from taxpayers.

This is only the latest plan to redevelop what locals know as the Golden Triangle, the wedge of office towers and older buildings squeezed between the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers right before they meet to form the Ohio. For 50 years, as the region's steel industry collapsed and the city's population fell by half, City Hall has been mounting such projects. Most, like this one, were passed under the cover of blight removal. Most, like this one, threatened to deploy the city's power of eminent domain. And most, like this one, took private property not for public use, as the U.S. Constitution prescribes, but for use by other private entities: developers, professional ball teams, corporate giants looking for a new skyscraper base.

Pittsburgh has no monopoly on what the posters on Charles Lee's windows call "eminent domain abuse." Detroit is using eminent domain law to replace a poor residential area with a more upscale neighborhood. In Indiana, 51 homes have been condemned so General Motors can build a factory to make Hummers. In Kansas City, Kansas, 150 families had to make way for a new race-car speedway. In East St. Louis, Illinois, a perfectly good auto-shredding plant may be destroyed so a nearby racetrack can enlarge its parking lot. In San Diego, property around the Padres' new ball yard is being seized from someone who wanted to build a hotel on it. Who's getting it now? A hotel company.

But Pittsburgh's planners seem to be in a class of their own. City Hall is on a $2 billion redevelopment rampage, and four eminent domain cases now loom. Pittsburgh is way too small to have so many cases, according to Dana Berliner of the Institute for Justice, a Washington, D.C.–based public interest law firm that intends to help local businesses fight the plan if City Hall makes good on its threat to use eminent domain. "Four cases is just ridiculous," Berliner says. "It shows how a willingness to trample on individual rights can completely wreak havoc on a single city."

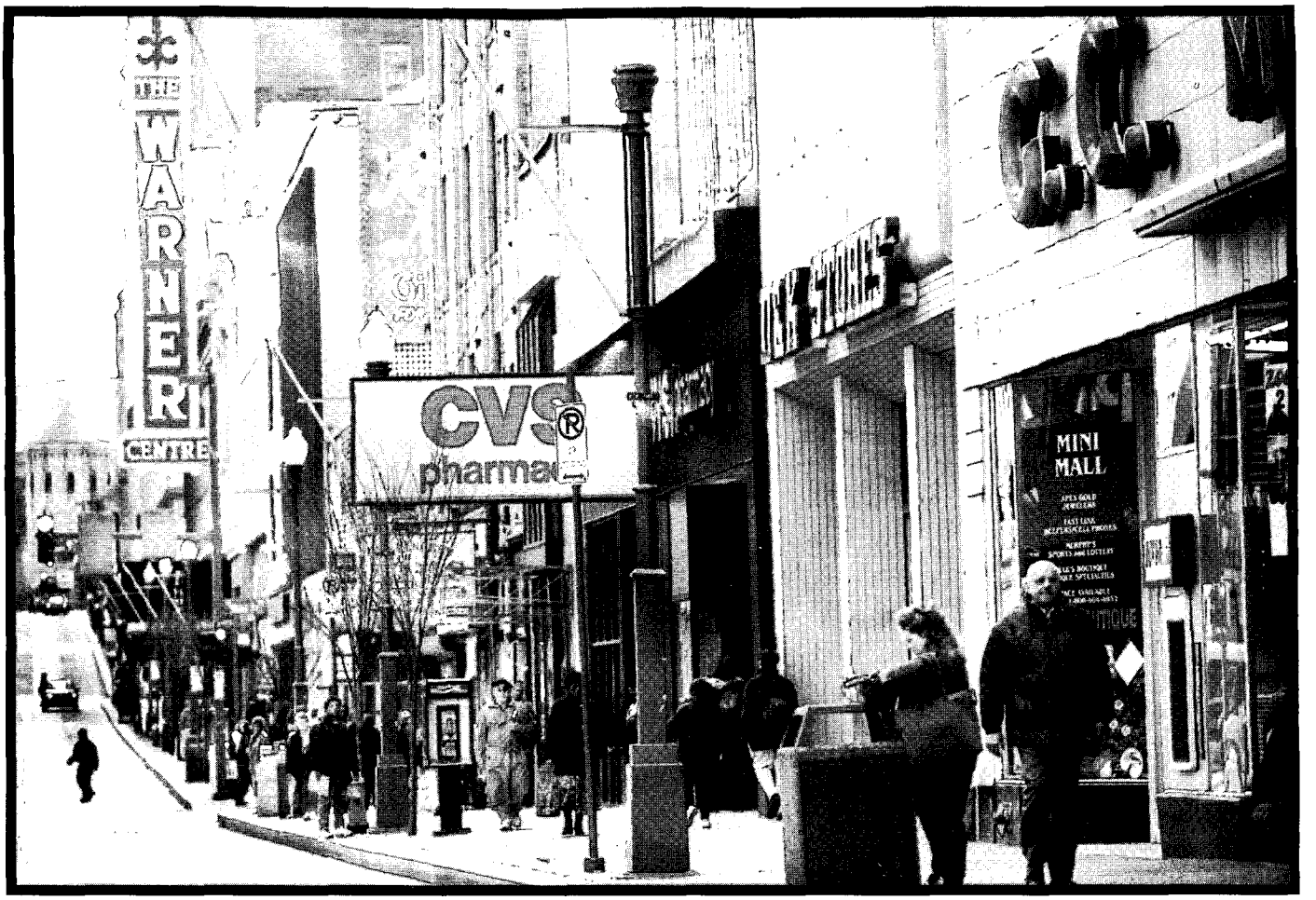
Behind the plan stand Mayor Murphy and Deputy Mayor Tom Cox, who argue that it's the best way to improve the fortunes of Pittsburgh's demographically challenged retail shopping core. To complete the project by the target date of 2002, they say, the city has to act quickly, buying the existing area, razing the buildings, and selling the clear-cut neighborhood to a single big developer: Chicago-based Urban Retail Properties.

The Fifth and Forbes district is indeed shabby, aesthetically impaired, and at times uncivilized. But it is not a commercial slum: 95 percent of it is occupied, and its sidewalks bustle with activity during the day. Without romanticizing them, and without glossing over their tawdry aspects, Fifth and Forbes are two of the Golden Triangle's last real old-time shopping streets.

At noontime during the week, when office workers fill the Triangle, Fifth and Forbes' sidewalks host a socioeconomic swirl of black and white, poor and rich, old and young, dirty and clean, sane and disturbed. Mothers carrying kids mix with lawyers carrying briefcases. A vendor or two hawk flowers or hats, carefully standing on private property. Vending has been outlawed on the public sidewalks. Add a bum in a doorway, a pusher making his rounds, and a bellowing street preacher, and it's easy to see why suburban shoppers prefer the safety and predictability of their well-regulated malls.

THE FIFTH AND FORBES DISTRICT IS INDEED SHABBY, AESTHETICALLY IMPAIRED, AND AT TIMES UNCIVILIZED. BUT IT IS NOT A COMMERCIAL SLUM: 95 PERCENT OF IT IS OCCUPIED.

In pre-mall days, Fifth Avenue was greater Pittsburgh's classiest shopping corridor. Not so now. Its businesses survive by serving an unusual customer mix—well-to-do downtown office workers and low-income city dwellers who arrive by public bus and jitney. Its parallel sister street, Forbes, is far funkier—and scarier to suburbanites—thanks to a small but highly visible collection of drug addicts, drug dealers, and homeless misfits. Its crumbled curbs and cracked side-



FIFTH AND FORBES

walks attest to decades of malign neglect by City Hall.

When people say the area's retail mix isn't up to par, they're usually referring to Fifth Avenue's wig shops, pager stores, and gold shops. Those are the expendable enterprises, stores that provoke snickers from everyone with class and taste. Of course, the shops' owners and customers see things differently.

Sook Kay owns Eastern Wigs, one of three doomed downtown wig stores. For 25 years she's made her living selling wigs and women's accessories on Fifth. Her poor-to-middle-class customers come from across western Pennsylvania; as with most other stores on Fifth and Forbes, her clientele is split about evenly between blacks and whites. Half buy accessories, half buy wigs—and no, they're not all transvestites. Many, for example, are women undergoing chemotherapy. "People think wigs are not necessary," says Kay. "But if they don't have hair, they really need one."

The gold shops are equally friendless. No one cares for them—except for their steady customers. David Kashi, owner of Golden Triangle Jewelers, has five or six competitors on both sides of the street, all selling discount gold chains and clunky hoop earrings. But he has obviously figured out how to please his market, which is almost 80 percent black. He's been in business for 12 years, somehow surviving City Hall's street-discombobulating, two-and-a-half-year repair job on Fifth Avenue's road surface and sidewalks, which some merchants suspect was deliberately protracted in order to kill off as many unwanted businesses as possible and make redevelopment seem even more necessary.

Kashi, an Israeli immigrant, can tell you why his business has lasted: "I am the only jewelry store that fixes jewelry on the spot. I am the only one that does body piercing. I sell pagers. I do dental gold cups." Kashi isn't afraid to adapt to change, and he doesn't care what he's selling, as long as he sells. City Hall wants him to move his shop, but there's nowhere else he can go. "It's an established clientele, and after years of trying you are forced to give it up," he says. "You are the bad guy because you are not rich enough."

Then there are Aaron and Bonnie Klein, the first merchants to contact the Institute for Justice. They run Camera Repair, a 60-year-old downtown business doomed by the city's plan. They also own the well-maintained building their shop resides in, near Market Square. The Kleins, who rent their upper floors to a beauty salon and a dental office, were outraged to learn that City Hall planned to use eminent

ABOVE AND RIGHT: PROTESTING THE CITY'S PLAN

domain to take the building they had bought as an investment for their kids' college educations. The city hasn't even made them—or any other property owner—an offer yet.

"It's amazing," Bonnie says. "Someone can pay a mortgage and pay taxes on a building they think they own, and all of a sudden the city can come in and decide they can claim your building. I think it's a disgrace."

The city's plan offends the district's shoppers as well as its shop owners, adding a current of racial politics to the issue. If you visit the National Record Mart, G.C. Murphy, or Revco Drugs, you'll find the racial mix is about 50-50. The window displays at Bradley's Book Cellar always include the latest books by black authors. The Card Center carries the entire Mahogany line of greeting cards to serve its black customers.

At Headgear, about 70 percent of the customers are black. They are Fifth Avenue regulars like James Hill, a tall, dapper, 32-year-old clotheshorse who lives in the city and rarely shops at suburban malls. When I met him, the radio ad salesman was wearing about $900 worth of clothing, most of which he bought at Fifth Avenue thread shops like Mo-Gear, a short walk or bus ride from his apartment.

Hill says the mayor's plan to attract choice high-end retailers like Nordstrom (which will reportedly demand upwards of $40 million in city money before it comes) and Lord & Taylor (which has already gotten $12 million of city dough) makes no sense. "There is no reason to take away something that has been here and is a tradition," he says. "You don't have to have totally upscale. It means you only want one kind of person downtown. That is discrimination against the underclass."

Unfortunately, neither the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People nor black councilman Sala Udin has stood up for the black victims of City Hall's plan. Udin's district includes downtown Pittsburgh and several of the neighborhoods its black shoppers live in. Asked why he and other minority leaders aren't raising a fuss about the plan's racial implications, Udin hints that it's "a racist misconception" and "stereotypical" to assume that black people want to shop at jewel and wig shops but not at Nordstrom or J. Crew.

Udin says he's willing to risk the mayor's plan, as long as the process is slow and "responsible" and includes as much input as possible from all corners of the public. As for eminent domain, Udin "dislikes displacing one private interest for another private interest." But he also thinks "there are times when the city has to move forward in the public interest."

In its bulldozing simplicity and arrogant certainty, the city's redevelopment scheme sounds suspiciously like the urban renewal disasters of the '50s and '60s. Since 1950, the local Urban Redevelopment Authority has leveled more than 1,500 acres of land. Any Pittsburgher over 40 can name the three poor and/or black neighborhoods that the bulldozers revitalized nearly to death: the Lower Hill District, East Liberty Circle, Allegheny Center. Urban renewal reduced hundreds of acres of these once-vital communities to sterile concrete wastelands, a condition that remains four decades later.

Less well-known projects have damaged nearly 70 acres at the tip of the Golden Triangle. In what are known locally as Renaissances I and II, City Hall and its mostly Republican friends in the area's corporate power structure erected modern office plazas, such as Gateway Center, and city-block-eating monoliths, such as Fifth Avenue Place. They look great on postcards and when Pittsburgh's muscular skyline appears on *Monday Night Football.* But they also turned huge chunks of organic city into artificial office parks devoid of human street life and retail commerce. History-drenched blocks filled with priceless old buildings were destroyed, along with railroad tracks and warehouses. Hotels, restaurants, scores of small businesses, and hundreds of residences were wiped out.

What's more, the Golden Triangle's streets were ripped up or blocked off for several years in the early '80s while the authorities built the T, the city's absurd three-stop subway and suburban light-rail system. Patty Maloney, whose family has owned several greeting card shops downtown for nearly five decades, claims that the turmoil caused by subway construction was what finally killed off downtown shopping. Stores that once stayed open until 8 or 9 p.m. started closing at 5 or 6.

The Maloneys have spent their lives playing dodgeball with City Hall's demolition experts. Four years ago, for instance, one of their stores was forced to move from Fifth Avenue, where it had been for 38 years, to a building they bought on Wood Street, a road that intersects both Fifth and Forbes. The shop was one of seven booted to make way for a $78 million Lazarus store that City Hall built as a virtual gift for its owners, Federated Department Stores. (Federated got $48 million in public funds, plus a secret sweetheart rent deal based on future sales for the store. This, City Hall hoped, would jump-start Fifth Avenue's retail rejuvenation.) So the Maloneys spent $350,000 refurbishing their new property—and now it's doomed by the Fifth and Forbes plan.

Many of the property owners on Fifth and Forbes are happy to sell out to the city. After all, property values have jumped since the city's plans were announced. These owners will be getting their just compensation, and most will be happy to settle.

But Maloney won't. She's leading a new organization of doomed businesses that has commissioned a gentler plan to spruce up the district without blowing everything up. Nor will landlord Gerald Schiller voluntarily sell out. The Schillers bought three buildings on the corner of Forbes and Wood more than 30 years ago as a long-term investment. The rental income from the buildings, which are now paid off, was to provide them with a stream of annuities and money for college educations. The money they'll get if they're forced to sell won't begin to provide that kind of financial security.

Mayor Murphy hopes he won't actually have to *use* the city's powers of eminent domain to get the Kleins, the Maloneys, and the rest to move. Usually, he gets his way just by *threatening* to bring in the law. That's what he did last year to try to force the Pittsburgh Wool Co. to sell its land to H.J. Heinz Co., so Heinz could expand its large warehouse and distribution center (and so the mayor could take credit for keeping about 1,200 jobs here). He's threatened eminent domain proceedings so often, in fact, that he's attracted the ire of *The Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page, which doesn't usually concern itself with Pittsburgh's local politics. And it's worked: In his seven years in office, Murphy has had to pull the trigger only once. (In that case, the victim was an adult movie theater that mounted a stiff First Amendment defense. The court battle continues to this day.)

How does the city get away with this? In large part, it's because Pennsylvania's courts have consistently allowed local governments to give private property to other private entities, as long as it's part of an effort to eradicate "blight." And the courts generally trust the judgment of the local authorities when it comes to what qualifies for that designation. As broadly defined by the state's 1945 redevelopment law, blight is essentially in the eye of the beholder: It can be everything from dilapidated buildings to inadequately planned streets to substandard lot sizes. In the last half-century, Pittsburgh has declared virtually the entire downtown blighted.

Bill Robinson, the state legislator who represents downtown Pittsburgh, is pushing a bill that would amend the re-

IT'S EASY TO GET SUPPORT FOR GENTRIFYING FIFTH AND FORBES FROM SUBURBAN EDITORIAL WRITERS AND OTHERS WHO DON'T SHOP THERE. TO THEM, FIFTH AND FORBES ARE TOO MESSY, TOO UGLY—TOO URBAN.

Eminent Domain & the GOP National Convention

How the upcoming event is flattening small businesses

By Michael W. Lynch

Camden, NJ—Evening's coming in mid-March and a neon "OPEN" sign lights up the front window of the Four Winds Motor Lodge, perched on Admiral Wilson Boulevard, a particularly desolute stretch of road that links this ruin of a town to Philadelphia via the Ben Franklin Bridge. Come April 31, the neon sign will be switched off for good, and the two-story brick building will be razed. Just in time for the Republican National Convention, which is set to take place this summer in the City of Brotherly Love, just across the Delaware River.

Such timing is sad, not only for the Four Winds, but also for the few non-wealthy or adventurous Republican conventioneers who might have saved a few bucks by staying there (rooms start at $39.95). A bevy of other tourist-friendly businesses are also being flattened just before the big GOP show: Buyrite Liquor, a booze megastore that shares the Four Winds parking lot; gas stations that charge rock-bottom prices; and Showgirls' Palace, a strip joint just a brief stroll down from the Four Winds. Showgirls' may be the one that will be missed the most: It's easy to believe that after a hard day of bickering over family values, any number of party stalwarts would have continued the conversation while experiencing the club's signature "couch and shower dancing." Indeed, Showgirls'—which advertises free "Big Rig Parking"—seems to have been designed with the Lincoln Navigators and Town Cars favored by conventioneers in mind.

The prime mover in all this destruction is New Jersey's Republican governor, Christie Whitman. She views the strip as a gateway to the Garden State and wants to make sure New Jersey has the "gem it deserves." Forget that the Republicans position themselves as the champions of small business. Forget even that any business—small or large, legal or illegal—is rare in Camden, a town so down on its luck that even pimps collect unemployment. Whitman helped develop a $45 million plan to turn these businesses into a public park, whether their owners like it or not.

The Four Winds owner, Jagdish Gupta, certainly doesn't. The Delaware River Port Authority, the agency exercising eminent domain, will only pay for the value of the land, not for licenses, stock, or any projected future income for the businesses. "I'm losing everything," explains Gupta in a clipped Indian accent. "If the move benefits society, fine. What we are losing they should compensate us for. We are losing both the land and the business. They are different." Gupta, who reportedly paid $1.5 million for the hotel in 1993, won't tell me how much the DRPA is offering him, how much he wants, or how much he has spent on lawyers to fight the government. Since I'm neither a congressman nor the governor, he figures I'm worthless to him.

No one would mistake Admiral Wilson Boulevard for Miracle Mile. A reflection of the city that it connects to Philadelphia, it's seen better days. Car dealerships and restaurants are now strip bars, gas stations, and liquor stores, if they're anything at all. The once-grand Oasis Hotel, built in the '20s as part of the country's largest YMCA, now rents rooms in an attached motor lodge to the strung-out prostitutes loitering in its parking lot. A couple doors down, a former old hotel and go-go club is now the Gatekeepers Fellowship Church, dedicated to saving the types who frequent the Oasis. It's sort of a self-contained economy.

But the strip is not useless, even for those who don't pay for sex. With 80,000 cars passing by on their way in and out of Philadelphia each day, it's ideal for gas stations and liquor stores, which can leverage New Jersey's relaxed liquor laws (Pennsylvania still sells hooch in state stores). A car stereo store has thrived on the strip for five years. A fur shop has found the strip profitable for six decades.

"Because Philly's right there, we could sell anything: $100 bottles of wine, $50 bottles of tequila," says the soon-to-be-out-of-work Sandy Shah, who works Buyrite's register. Co-worker Cheryl Gattuso figures the prostitutes who work the streets and frequent the hotels will just move their business to the new park, which is slated to open in time for the July convention.

Perhaps it will become a cruiser's park, I venture, as a regular customer buys a bottle of Captain Morgan's Spiced Rum and complains that her preferred size is no longer in stock. Gattuso says guys already work the strip; she doesn't doubt that they'll move to the park. So maybe things won't be so bad for the Republican conventioneers after all.

Michael W. Lynch is REASON*'s Washington editor.*

development law to include "a more precise definition of blight." His carefully worded amendment includes the sentence, "In no event may private real property acquired by an authority through eminent domain proceedings be sold, leased or otherwise transferred to a private person."

It's easy to get support for gentrifying Fifth and Forbes from suburban editorial writers and others who don't shop on the streets now. To them, Fifth and Forbes are too messy, too ugly—too *urban.* City Hall and its downtown allies agree. They're too busy patting themselves on the back to notice the damage their wrecking balls have been doing.

But City Hall's plans have opponents from across the political spectrum. There is Rep. Robinson, and there are businessfolk like Maloney. There are historical preservationists, including Arthur Ziegler, the nationally known developer behind Station Square, the former train terminal that is the city's top tourist destination. Ziegler says the Fifth and Forbes plan is "the 1950s revisited" and predicts that relying solely on national retailers is guaranteed to fail. Trying to make the best of a bad situation, he had his influential Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation commission a New York architect to draw up a more sophisticated, commercially diverse, and street-life-friendly alternative. It too would use eminent domain to remove unwilling property owners, and only about 25 percent of the existing businesses would be able to stay. It saves more buildings and adds about 700 residences above the stores; as a bonus, it includes a new Market Hall over Market Square that would be home to food stalls and a rooftop skating rink. Thus far, Urban Retail Properties has ignored these ideas.

A more hard-core opponent is the Allegheny Institute, a pro-market Pennsylvania think tank that's less interested in designing a more livable plan than in stopping the city's power to impose such plans at all. Funded by local billionaire Richard Mellon Scaife (of Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy fame), the institute has organized rallies against the mayor's eminent domain abuse. Scaife's *Pittsburgh Tribune Review* has also railed against the plan, in contrast to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*'s relentless editorial cheerleading. The city's two alternative weeklies also strongly oppose the plan.

There are even a few opponents within the city government. By January, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the City Planning Commission, and the Historic Review Commission—all of whose members are appointed by the mayor—had approved the plan with no squeaks of dissent. Most people expected the all-Democrat City Council to rubberstamp the plan as well. It's been less compliant than expected, though, with leftist councilman James Ferlo mounting the fiercest fight.

Ferlo believes he can scrape together a 5–4 vote to stop the Fifth and Forbes project. Few insiders agree. They predict most council members will cut private political deals with Mayor Murphy. As of late March, it's too early to tell whether Ferlo will prevail, or if soon only the lawyers will stand between the district and the wrecking ball.

Assuming that the city gets the go-ahead, there's at least one more problem with the Fifth and Forbes plan: It probably won't work. Since the malls came, Pittsburghers have shown a deepening disinterest in the Golden Triangle: About 125,000 people work there by day, but virtually no one but the opera-and-symphony crowd goes there regularly at night. Pittsburgh's nightlife is on the South Side and the Strip District—two neighborhoods largely untouched by city planning. A rebuilt Fifth and Forbes shopping and entertainment playground would have to compete with those districts, with new developments planned for Station Square, and with the urge simply to head home to the suburbs after work. Furthermore, though serious, predatory crime is rare, the bums, pushers, and prostitutes who haunt the area's sidewalks can't be ignored. Their numbers are small, but they are visible enough to drive most suburbanites away.

THERE'S ONE MORE PROBLEM WITH THE FIFTH AND FORBES PLAN: IT PROBABLY WON'T WORK. SINCE THE MALLS CAME, PITTSBURGHERS HAVE SHOWN A DEEPENING DISINTEREST IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE.

Even if the Fifth and Forbes project succeeds in resurrecting downtown—a wild crapshoot at best—its costs will be high and many. The middle of the Golden Triangle will be torn up for another three years. At least 62 old buildings, some of them architecturally precious, will be lost forever. Pittsburgh will lose the only shopping market in the center city for poor people and people dependent on public transportation. As many as 1,000 jobs will be lost. And scores of small and medium-size businesses will have to move.

Assuming, that is, that they can find a place to move to, in this downtown that's been steadily stripped of its character and vitality by government planners and their demolition crews.

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Loaded Coverage

How the news media miss the mark on the gun issue

By Kenneth Smith

When Joel Myrick heard a shot ring out at Pearl High School, he recognized the sound immediately. Myrick, an assistant principal at the school, herded students into his office and locked the door behind them. He walked out into a common area, where he saw a boy named Luke Woodham shoot another student with a hunting rifle and start down a hallway. Myrick suspected he would go from room to room firing at others, but he had no way of stopping him.

Then Myrick remembered that he had a gun in his car; he had recently visited out-of-town relatives, and he always took his .45 automatic with him when he traveled. He ran to the car, found the gun, and put a round in the chamber. He turned back toward the school, only to find Woodham running to his own vehicle. When the boy spun out in the grass trying to drive away, Myrick went over to the car with his gun trained on Woodham and told him to get out. He forced Woodham to the ground and waited for police to arrive.

PETER BENNETT

Joel Myrick addresses the media

So the mayhem in Pearl, Mississippi, ended. Two students died and seven more were wounded in the October 1, 1997, attack. Woodham had additional rounds in his gun at the time he was arrested. The toll could have gone higher had it not been for Myrick.

Anyone reading the local paper, the *Rankin County News*, would have known all about Joel Myrick's heroics. But anyone watching evening newscasts on, say, ABC, CBS, or CNN wouldn't have known that it took an armed man to stop the shooting. None of them mentioned it. According to the Alexandria, Virginia-based Media Research Center, NBC mentioned it just twice, once on the October 2 *Nightly News* and once on the *Today* show the next morning.

Such coverage—or, in this case, noncoverage—gives viewers a one-sided perspective on firearms. Not reporting fully what happened in Pearl contributes to the notion that either someone is using guns to kill and maim students, New York commuters, or Capitol Hill police officers (as on occasion someone has) or...nothing. In other words, there's no good reason for the 30 million people watching the networks' nightly newscasts, or the 13 million watching morning newscasts, to own a gun, much less use it.

Two studies of media bias in the last year have attempted to measure the way selective reporting affects coverage of gun issues. One came from the conservative Media Research Center, which highlighted the short shrift given Myrick. The other was written by Brian Patrick, a communications researcher at the University of Michigan and author of *The National Rifle Association and the Media: The Motivating Force of Negative Coverage*, a forthcoming book based on his doctoral dissertation. "It's clear that when it comes to the gun debate," said MRC Chairman Brent Bozell, "TV news is no objective referee. It is a partisan player that has chosen sides—the anti-gun, anti–Second Amendment side."

Some of the findings concerning the way journalists miss the mark on guns may be familiar. For instance, there's the tally of pro–gun control and pro–gun rights statements on news programs. In "Outgunned: How the Network News Media Are Spinning the Gun Control Debate," which the MRC released in January, the group tracked the number of statements supporting gun control vs. the number supporting gun rights on evening news broadcasts on ABC, NBC, CBS, and CNN, and on morning news programs on ABC, NBC, and CBS. Statements that violent crime occurs because of guns, not criminals, or that gun control prevents crime were considered to be pro–gun control. Statements suggesting that gun control would not reduce crime; that criminals, not guns, are the problem; that Americans have a constitutional right to keep and bear arms; and that right-to-carry laws for concealed weapons have caused a drop in crime were all considered pro–gun rights. Stories with a disparity of greater than 1.5 to 1 were regarded as either pro–gun control or pro–gun rights.

AP / WIDE WORLD PHOTO

During a two-year period from 1997 through 1999, the MRC counted 653 gun-related stories. Those advocating more gun control outnumbered stories opposing gun control by almost 10 to 1.

During the two-year period from July 1, 1997, through June 30, 1999, the MRC counted 653 gun-related stories. Those advocating more gun control outnumbered stories opposing gun control by 357 to 36, or a ratio of almost 10 to 1. The rest were neutral. In addition, the organization found that the networks were twice as likely to broadcast anti-gun soundbites as pro-gun ones. Gun control advocates appeared on the morning shows as guests on 82 occasions, compared to just 37 for gun-rights activists.

Then there's the use of loaded adjectives and verbs of attribution. Patrick, the University of Michigan researcher, compared reporting on five groups: the National Rifle Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Association of Retired Persons, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Handgun Control Inc. (A self-described "radical pluralist," Patrick is a member of both the NRA and the ACLU). Unlike the MRC, Patrick focused on print journalism in what he calls the "elite" press—*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. The period he covered ran from January 1990 through June 1998. He looked at news stories (59.5 percent of the articles sampled), editorials and columns (20 percent), letters to the editor (12.7 percent), and book reviews, entertainment announcements, and obituaries (1.7 percent).

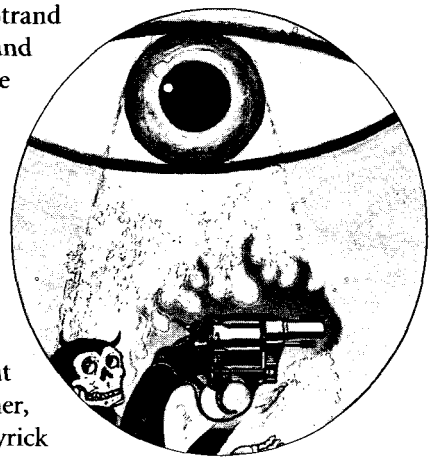
Patrick's results, released in June, are similar to the MRC's. He found that journalists quote NRA officials about half as often as Handgun Control officials and only a third as much as representatives of the other groups. When reporters and opinion writers do quote them, they tend to use unfriendly terms of attribution such as "claims," "whines," or "would have us believe." Spokesmen for Handgun Control, by contrast, "found," "showed," or "demonstrated." The effect, says Patrick, is to make NRA positions appear tentative, while those of other groups come off as undisputed facts.

Journalists don't mind getting personal in their treatment of group leaders. But while they tend to describe Handgun Control's Sarah Brady in positive terms like *indefatigable*, *effective*, and *courteous*, they use words like *portly*, *sweaty*, and *squinty* for NRA officials. A 1994 article in *The New York Times Magazine* on then–NRA President Tanya Metaksa is a good example: "Metaksa appeared in the doorway. She is an intimidating presence. Square shouldered, large-breasted, handsome. She has a withering stare that she says comes from her late father." Not a particularly inviting portrait. Patrick couldn't help noticing that coverage of the other groups didn't mention the size of the leadership's breasts.

Still, such sneers say more about the reporter than the subject. More serious for the outcome of the gun debate in this country are the stories, like Joel Myrick's, that reporters don't write or broadcast and the questions they don't ask. Consider a few examples.

In April 1998, a 14-year-old middle school student in Edinboro, Pennsylvania, walked into a school dance with a .25-caliber handgun and opened fire, killing a science teacher and wounding several students. He turned to flee, but the owner of the hall, James Strand, armed with a shotgun, chased him into a field. When the boy stopped to reload, Strand captured him and held him until police arrived 11 minutes later.

Out of 596 TV, newspaper, and magazine stories on the Edinboro crime, just 35 mentioned Strand, reports economist John Lott, author of *More Guns, Less Crime*, in a 1999 *National Review* article. Even when the media did report Strand's story, they didn't report all of it. The New York *Daily News* said only that Strand had "persuaded" the shooter to surrender. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* said Strand chased the shooter down and "held him until police came."



Much the same is true in the case of Joel Myrick, says Lott. Out of 687 stories he found on the shootings in Pearl, just 19 made reference to Myrick. Some of those that mentioned him left his gun out of the story. CBS's Dan Rather, for example, reported, "Myrick

Reporters treat the NRA as a lobbying powerhouse (which it can be). The problem is that there appears to be no comparable story on political donations by Handgun Control or other similar organizations.

eventually subdued the gunman." *How* he "subdued" him Rather didn't say.

In May 1998, 15-year-old Kip Kinkel walked into the crowded cafeteria of Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon, and opened up on students with a .22-caliber semi-automatic rifle. He shot wildly at first, then started singling students out for death. At one point Kinkel walked up to a student who was lying on the floor, placed the rifle to her head, and attempted to fire three times, but nothing happened. Wrestler Jacob Ryker, shot through the lung in the first wave of bullets, charged the 15 feet separating him from Kinkel, tackled him, and disarmed him. Had Ryker not done so, the toll could have been much higher than the roughly two dozen injuries and two deaths the shooting caused.

In a *Nightline* broadcast shortly after the shooting, ABC's Ted Koppel credited Ryker with halting the shooting. But once the details of the shooting were out of the way, the program quickly turned into another debate on gun control. Koppel and his reporters never explained how it was that Ryker knew when to attack Kinkel; the hero could have been doing nothing more than making himself a better target in a suicidal charge. It turned out that Ryker and his family were hunters and target shooters. From the sounds the gun made, Ryker knew Kinkel was out of ammunition. Ryker's parents credited his familiarity with firearms with helping to stop the shooting.

In each case, guns were part of the problem, but they were also part of the solution. Many media outlets told only the first side of the story. That would be poor reporting under any circumstance, but it is particularly egregious given the amount of time and energy the media have devoted to covering these incidents. In its study, the MRC counted 653 TV news segments on gun policy in two years. In light of the April 1999 massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, and other school shootings, the attention was understandable. But with all that time devoted to a single issue, there was plenty of opportunity to tell the full story.

Emblematic of the media's approach to guns and violence is that of *Good Morning, America* co-host Charles Gibson, who in a June 4, 1999, interview urged President Clinton to do the right thing in the wake of the Columbine shootings. "When you went to Littleton," Gibson said, "a friend of yours who supports you on gun control said to me in the last 48 hours, 'The President'—because, as he said, Littleton has seared the national conscience—'the President had a chance to roar on gun control, and he meowed.' And that was a friend of yours. There are very basic measures that could be taken that people agree on. We register every automobile in America. We don't register guns. That's a step that would make a difference."

If Gibson were less interested in editorializing than in reporting, he might have told viewers that Darrell Scott, whose 17-year-old daughter, Rachel, died in the Columbine massacre, was more skeptical about new gun control measures. To her credit, NBC's Gwen Ifill reported that Scott told Congress, "No amount of laws can stop someone who spends months planning this type of massacre."

The difficulty that gun owners and organizations like the NRA have in telling their stories plays out in other ways, Patrick found. For instance, the print media routinely cover pseudo-events of other interest groups that they wouldn't think of covering for the NRA. Coverage of NRA press conferences, press releases, reports, and demonstrations is about one-fifth of Handgun Control's and about one-seventh of the AARP's.

Indeed, Patrick reports in his study, the NRA actually receives more coverage as a result of other groups' pseudo-events than it does from its own. "None of the other interest groups receives similar treatment," he writes. In particular, Patrick cites a 1993 *Los Angeles Times* article, "Protestors Against Gun Violence Target NRA Offices," that he says appeared "to be taken directly from a press release." When journalists do cover an NRA event, Patrick says, they tend to analyze it as an exercise in media manipulation. Reporters end up interviewing each other instead of NRA officials to report on the success or failure of the organization's public relations effort.

Gun control proponents apparently expect more sympathetic treatment when it comes to coverage of their events. In June 1996, John Lott was searching for someone to provide critical comments at a Cato Institute event focusing on research in which he and economist David Mustard had

found that allowing more people to carry guns reduces crime. He was having a hard time finding anyone to disagree with him publicly, which seemed odd given the obvious antipathy toward his research among gun control activists. A conversation he had with Suzanne Glick of the Violence Policy Center helped explain their reluctance. According to Lott, she declined to comment on his findings at Cato because she didn't want to "help give any publicity to the paper." When he explained that C-SPAN would be covering the Cato event, Lott recalls, she said she didn't care because "we can get good media whenever we want."

And they can count on careless reporting on their behalf. Rather than comment *directly* on Lott's findings, many activists tried to downplay their significance by saying that the gun industry had, in effect, bought and paid for them. Specifically, they noted that Lott's academic position, then at the University of Chicago, was funded by a grant from the Olin Foundation. (See "Cold Comfort," January.) The foundation, the Associated Press reported in newspapers across the country, "is associated with the Olin Corp. Olin's Winchester division manufactures rifles and bullets." As it happens, the two are separate organizations, and the Winchester division makes only ammunition, not guns. (In any case, Olin fellows are chosen by a faculty committee, not by the foundation.) But Lott said he knew of only one paper that, having carried the original AP story, also ran the subsequent correction.

Gun control advocates escape some of the negative press the NRA receives because journalists don't hold them to the same standards. As a matter of course, reporters treat the NRA as a special interest and lobbying powerhouse (which it can be) out to overturn the public will (which is a judgment call). Patrick cites a March 1996 *Washington Post* article detailing political contributions from the NRA to members of Congress. The story itself was generally balanced: The "president" of Common Cause described the contributions as a "classical" example of how money influences politics, while an NRA "chief lobbyist" (note the distinction in labeling) said she did not agree. The problem, Patrick writes, is that "there appears in the long run to be no comparable story on political donations" by Handgun Control or the other organizations whose coverage he examined.

Likewise, the media are in the habit of linking the NRA to any outbreak of gun-related violence, regardless of whether any of its members (to say nothing of its officials) are actually involved. This may mean juxtaposing photographs of crime scenes, weeping mothers, and grim memorials with stories about the NRA. Or the linkage may consist of a phone call to NRA officials asking for comment on a school shooting. The premise of such treatment is that access to weapons, which the organization defends, is to blame for the violence. One might just as easily juxtapose Handgun Control officials with the violence on the grounds that they limited the availability of guns to victims who might otherwise have been able to defend themselves.

But again, what the media don't report about guns and violence is just as important as what they do report. There are countless cases, full of drama and emotion, in which Americans use guns to prevent calamity. Based on survey data, Florida State University criminologist Gary Kleck estimates that Americans use guns to defend themselves as many as 2.5 million times a year. In the vast majority of these cases, the gun is not fired—simply brandishing it is enough to deter the attack. Such incidents rarely receive much coverage, and they rarely, if ever, prompt phone calls to Handgun Control.

In 1994 a Washington, D.C., woman heard noises late one night and discovered intruders who were in the process of binding and gagging one of her daughters. The daughter was a potential witness in a court case against one of the intruders. Seeing that the men were armed with knives and gasoline and fearing for her daughter's life, the woman scuffled with one of the intruders and wound up rolling down the stairs with one. She then got up, reached into a closet and pulled out a handgun, with which she shot one of the men. The other intruder fled. "I thank God that I did have a gun in here," she told a D.C. TV reporter, "because I know for a fact that if I didn't have a gun in here, we would be dead right now." D.C. has some of the toughest gun control laws in the country, with the full support of anti-gun activists. Had this woman obeyed the law, she would almost certainly have been killed. (D.C. officials declined to charge her in connection with the shooting.) Reporters did not call Handgun Control for comment.

That same year, a 22-year-old Marine named Rayna Ross awoke one night to find a former boyfriend had broken into her Woodbridge, Virginia, apartment, armed with a bayonet. He had broken into her apartment before and, a Marine himself, had refused orders to stay away from her. But Ross had gotten a handgun to protect herself when the Marines wouldn't, and she shot and killed the intruder. No one called gun control organizations for comment.

At the time of her confirmation hearings in 1997, soon-to-be Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman said the hardships of growing up as a black person in Alabama had prepared her for the worst Washington could offer. She told reporters about a trip she took with her father when she was 5 years old to visit a minister on Christmas Eve. As they left the house, she noticed that her father's small silver pistol was out on the front seat of the car, a sign that he was afraid of trouble ahead. Sure enough, a group of Klansmen ran their car off the road. To keep the Klansmen from finding young Alexis, her father got out of the car and went to meet

If the war journalists are waging is successful—either through stricter laws or by convincing people that owning firearms isn't worth the risk—the next Joel Myrick may not have a gun.

them. Before he left, he pressed the silver pistol into the little girl's hand and said, "If anyone opens this door, I want you to pull the trigger." Her father was beaten but survived the incident. No one called gun controllers to ask whether, the Klan notwithstanding, it was wrong to give the 5-year-old girl the means to protect herself.

In short, as Patrick observed, the "NRA is indeed treated much differently from the other groups." Mainstream press critics have shown little interest in this disparity. David Shaw of the *Los Angeles Times*, for example, says he has not written on the topic and can't recall seeing any articles about it.

The few journalists who responded to Patrick's requests for interviews suggested that the NRA had hurt itself by moving out of Washington, D.C., in 1994 to a location in Fairfax County, Virginia, some 45 minutes away from the reporters centered in the nation's capital. Handgun Control remained in Washington and is therefore more accessible. Patrick also suggests there is a "cyclical feedback" problem in which news organizations copy each another. One journalist admitted his research was "parochial"; he looked at *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and other major publications to see what they had published on the subject. The biases in early stories were therefore recycled into new ones.

These biases are largely ideological. One journalist flatly told Patrick: "I've been a reporter for 25 years, and I'm familiar with the opinions of other people in the field. Elite reporters sympathize with gun control positions, not the NRA." Another observed, "Sarah Brady is just like us." (The reporters spoke with Patrick on the condition that he not divulge their names or employers.)

Given such prejudices, is it hopelessly unrealistic to expect fair reporting on the gun issue? Perhaps not. In March, *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry wrote about an 83-year-old widower named A.D. Parker who had been awakened a few weeks before by the sounds of a burglar prying open the back door of his San Francisco home. Parker grabbed an old .38-caliber revolver from under his bed and went to the doorway of his bedroom, where he was confronted by Michael Moore, a convicted felon who was carrying a large wrench and a crowbar. Parker fired once, slammed the door, and dialed 911. Moore was pronounced dead a short time later from a gunshot wound to the chest. "I shot him just that once," Parker told *The San Francisco Examiner*. "If I had waited a second longer, I don't think I'd be around to tell my story." Raspberry, usually a strong supporter of stricter gun control, said the incident had given him pause. "In general, I think we'd all be a lot safer with a lot fewer guns," he wrote. "On the other hand, I'm very glad A.D. Parker was armed."

Unfortunately, that sort of open-mindedness is rare among elite journalists. More typical is the unabashed identification with the gun control cause that was reflected in a 1993 column by Thomas Winship, former editor of *The Boston Globe*, in the trade journal *Editor and Publisher*. Under the headline, "Step up the war against guns," Winship declared: "It is time to square off against guns. We are talking about a sustained newspaper crusade." He advised newspapers to highlight youth killings on page 1 and to report on gun manufacturing levels and the flow of guns. (These are themes that Patrick says he encountered in analyzing the content of the NRA's press coverage.) "Support all forms of gun licensing," said Winship, "in fact all causes the NRA opposes."

If the media really are fighting a war rather than reporting the news, they aren't just doing a disservice to their readers. They may be threatening the well-being of future shooting victims. If the war they're waging is successful—either through stricter laws or by convincing people that owning firearms isn't worth the risk—the next Joel Myrick may not have a gun. ◆

Kenneth Smith (smithk@twtmail.com) is deputy editor of the Washington Times *editorial page.*

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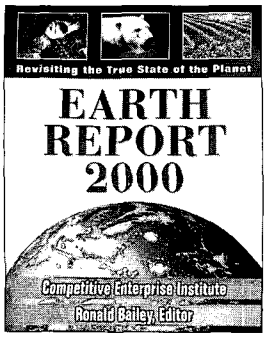

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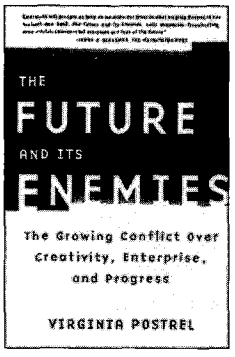

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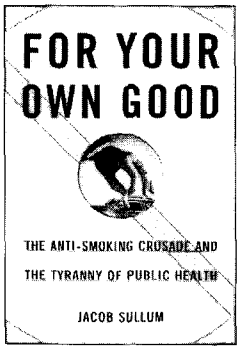

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Virginia Postrel

Joy, to the World

A techno-celebrity's childish manifesto

Since its earliest days, *Wired* magazine has always had a genius for publicity. It lost its edge somewhat when Condé Nast took over two years ago and the new crew replaced *Wired*'s Bay Area techno-exuberance with the New York publishing formulas that eschew ideas in favor of celebrities.

But the hype machine came roaring back with the April cover story—a long, long, *long* think piece by the hip software genius Bill Joy, chief scientist at Sun Microsystems. (The article can be read at www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.04/joy.html.) Joy was the key designer of Berkeley Unix and the man behind Sun's Java and Jini. He is a techno-celebrity of the first order.

But he's not a geeky geek. With his stylish all-black outfits and narrow eyeglass frames, Joy looks more Hollywood than Silicon Valley. (He actually lives in Aspen.) And he's as earnest and elitist as a Harvard professor. In short, he's the perfect authority to book on TV. And he had the perfect message: Technological research must be stopped.

Specifically, Joy is worried, really worried—20,000 words and five months of writing worried—that 21st-century technologies threaten to make human beings extinct. The threats are intelligent robots, nanotechnology (the ability to build things on the atomic level), and genetic engineering. All of them, he acknowledges, offer wonderful advantages, but they are, in his view, simply too dangerous to develop. We should stop investigating these ideas, he argues, before they become uncontrollable realities.

"The new Pandora's boxes of genetics, nanotechnology, and robotics are almost open. Ideas can't be put back in a box; unlike uranium or plutonium, they don't need to be mined or refined, and they can be freely copied," he writes. "Once they are out, they are out." So we'd better keep them safely unknown.

Joy's article starts with the idea that highly intelligent robots might supercede human beings. This could happen because a) the robots are so great we become dependent on them and essentially bore ourselves to death (a scenario Joy snagged from the Unabomber manifesto) or b) the robots outcompete us for economic resources, so that we can't afford enough food, water, land, energy, etc., to survive, just as placental mammals wiped out competing marsupials in the Americas (an idea from robotics researcher Hans Moravec).

There's also the possibility, outlined by Ray Kurzweil in *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, that we might gradually merge with our machines, enhancing our intelligence or downloading our consciousness, and thus change the nature of humanity. Kurzweil and his book inspired Joy's nightmares, but Joy doesn't really explore Kurzweil's scenario.

Bill Joy is incredibly foolish, in the parochial, reality-dodging way that geniuses sometimes are. He is willing to sacrifice other people's lives and liberty to his fantasies of power and control.

Instead, he moves quickly to a nearer-term threat—the possibility that someone might use genetic engineering to create a devastating plague. This scenario illustrates the fundamental problems of these new technologies. Unlike 20th-century weapons of mass destruction, notably nuclear bombs, these are hard to limit to a small cadre of government-approved scientists and engineers.

"For the first time," writes Joy, "these accidents and abuses are widely within the reach of individuals or small groups. They will not require large facilities or rare raw materials. Knowledge alone will enable the use of them." We will face "a surprising and terrible empowerment of extreme individuals." In the future, the Unabomber will be a molecular biologist. And, once created, these technologies will have the ability to reproduce and spread, to self-replicate beyond the control of their creators and threaten widespread destruction.

To avoid that prospect, Joy advocates "relinquishment: to limit development of the technologies that are too dangerous, by limiting our pursuit of certain kinds of knowledge." He would enforce that limit through "a verification regime similar to that for biological weapons, but on an unprecedented scale," combined with a scientific code of conduct that forbids such research. That's the prescription that made TV bookers and newspaper editorialists sit up and take notice. A scientist was saying we should stop scientific research.

The technologies Joy fears do indeed have their dark side, and it does lie in their easy, decentralized production and subsequent self-replication. These technologies can be genuinely scary. But Joy's policy prescriptions are breathtakingly naive, blinkered, and totalitarian. They are contradicted by his own arguments, and by the uncomfortable historical realities Joy skirts even as he invokes them. Though it strains to seem wise, Joy's manifesto is at once childlike and childish.

Introducing Joy on *Good Morning America*, Charles Gibson explained the purpose of the article: "The contents of an article coming out this morning in *Wired* magazine are being compared to the 1939 letter that Albert Einstein wrote to President Roosevelt warning of the consequences of the atomic bomb. Today's warning that new technology could mean the extermination of mankind. It comes from a respected scientist who was one of the key architects of the information age,

and that's why his warning is causing such a stir in *The Washington Post* and other newspapers."

The Einstein comparison actually came, rather grandiosely, from Joy himself, in an interview with the *Post*'s Joel Garreau. Except, of course, that Einstein did not advise Roosevelt to renounce development of the bomb, or to end research in atomic physics. In 1939, even pacifist-leaning physicists couldn't pretend that you could shut down science and count on evildoers to leave it, and you, alone. Facing the Nazis, Joy blinks. Facing Stalin, he closes his eyes altogether.

"We should have learned a lesson from the making of the first atomic bomb and the resulting arms race," writes Joy. "We didn't do well then, and the parallels to our current situation are troubling."

Joy does not spell out exactly what lesson we should have learned, but by analogy it would be that the atomic bomb *and the science underlying it* should not have been pursued, because they were simply too dangerous. Physicists should have banded together in the 1930s to shut down this research. It sounds completely nuts, of course, to say that the 20th century's scientific giants should have abandoned their study of the fundamentals of matter and energy. So, Joy doesn't say that.

Instead, he retreats into the fantasy world of Cold War naifs. He cheers the idea, proposed after World War II, that the United Nations should have been given a monopoly on nuclear weapons research. Although he admits that Stalin would never have agreed to such a monopoly, he does not face the implications of that fact. He just wistfully refers to "distrust by the Soviets." Poor Stalin. He really needed to work on those trust issues. So, apparently, did Americans who feared Soviet intentions. Perhaps an Aspen Institute seminar would have helped.

Joy needs to spend some serious time in Baghdad. You simply cannot just will away technologies of mass destruction. With treaties and verification systems in place, 20th-century weapons aren't that hard to hide, especially if their owners control the territory in which they're hiding. And by Joy's own admission, 21st-century biotech and nanotech (let's leave aside the killer robots) will be accessible to just about anyone. You won't have to run a country to get them. And even current research wouldn't be that hard to conduct secretly.

Their value as weapons alone makes these technologies uncontrollable. But it isn't the only strong incentive to ignore a total ban. Preserving life and eliminating poverty are also pretty damned powerful incentives. We're not all Aspen-dwelling millionaires. You can bet the Chinese and Indians (a billion people each, with elites growing more prosperous and technologically savvy by the day) would pour resources into nanotechnology simply for its promise of material plenty. Add in the weapons potential, and you've got guaranteed development. And there will always be enough rich eccentrics who want to live forever, or to cure the diseases of their beloveds, to fund cheap biotech.

In other words, that "unprecedented" verification regime would require frequent inspection and constant surveillance of every garage, every basement, every bathroom, every mountain hideaway on the entire planet—a planet inhabited by six billion potential technology developers, not a small clique of a few dozen world-class physicists. Does Joy have any idea how big the world is? The authorities can't find an abortion-clinic bomber hiding out in the hills of North Carolina, much less destroy every cocaine facility in Central America. And there's always Baghdad.

Bill Joy is a lot smarter than I'll ever be. But he is also incredibly foolish, in the parochial, reality-dodging way that geniuses sometimes are. And he is willing to sacrifice an awful lot of other people's lives and liberty to his fantasies of power and control.

If–then statements are a staple of computer programming. Here's one to consider: "*If* we could agree, *as a species*, what we wanted, where we were headed, and why, then we would make our future much less dangerous—then we might understand what we can and should relinquish." (Emphasis added.) How, exactly, does a species of more than six billion intelligent individuals, with their own plans and purposes, agree on anything? Joy imagines the world as a small, technological elite and assumes away the problems of politics. He and his friends will just get together and agree on what to do.

Even as he invokes the unintended consequences (invariably bad) of technology, he also imagines a world in which all consequences are known in advance and life proceeds according to a master plan. That isn't the world we live in, nor is it a world that anyone who values their own purposes would find congenial, even if it were possible.

Basing sweeping policy prescriptions on an if–then statement whose "if" doesn't hold is bizarre. Since we *can't* agree as a species on what we want, where we're headed, and why, then we can't understand what we can and should relinquish—no matter how much Joy wishes things were otherwise.

HENRY PAYNE

Indeed, that very lack of agreement, and all the threats (and promises) it entails, argues in favor of developing as much knowledge as possible. When we cannot anticipate or eliminate all hazards, we need to have as many ways to bounce back from destruction as possible—a portfolio of resilient responses. The United States relinquished biological weapons, as Joy says, but it did not eliminate the Centers for Disease Control or give up inoculating military troops.

Ultimately, Joy's article is not a serious exploration of how to deal with the potential threats of powerful, dispersed, self-replicating technologies. That would require far greater technical depth—Could nanotechnology be developed without the ability to self-replicate indefinitely, perhaps by making it dependent on external energy sources? What would it take to maintain a constantly adapting range of immunizations?—and much, much greater social sophistication. It would mean thinking a few steps ahead, and accepting the knowledge of good and evil, not reimagining a world made up of benevolent, unambitious, incurious Buddhas.

Serious consideration of these questions also means drawing on all sorts of social scientists, immunologists, arms control experts, cognitive scientists, historians, and science fiction novelists, not limiting your research to inventors, physicists, and the Dalai Lama. Joy is right that there is nothing wrong with being a generalist. But he is far too specialized to claim that title.

If Joy's article isn't really about coping with dangerous technologies, what is it? Read carefully, it is exactly what the man-bites-dog press accounts promised: a screed against unpredictable change, a call for a static world, and an assault on commerce and the individual desires it serves. It is the same old attack on the open society, just wrapped in cool clothes.

"We are being propelled into this new century with no plan, no control, no brakes," writes Joy, employing the classic rhetoric of those who distrust the "chaos" created by individual creativity and freedom. And later, "We must find alternative outlets for our creative forces, beyond the culture of perpetual economic growth; this growth has largely been a blessing for several hundred years, but it has not brought us unalloyed happiness, and we must now choose between the pursuit of unrestricted and undirected growth through science and technology and the clear accompanying dangers."

No culture can provide "unalloyed happiness." No one who uses that standard should be taken seriously. If Bill Joy needs a new outlet for his creativity, something that doesn't involve economic growth or technological innovation, he can quit his day job. But I wouldn't recommend a career in public policy. ◆

Virginia Postrel (vpostrel@reason.com) is REASON*'s editor-at-large and the author of* The Future and Its Enemies: The Growing Conflict Over Creativity, Enterprise, and Progress.

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What is your Will?

Tough Choice

Can school choice win in Michigan? Should it?

By John J. Miller

When Michigan's Gov. John Engler came out swinging against a state school-choice ballot initiative last year, he attracted national attention. Here was a reform-minded Republican bucking one of his party's few meaningful public-policy ideas. For 10 years, Engler has cut taxes, slashed welfare, and held state spending in check. Private-school choice seems a natural addition to this portfolio, and most observers assumed that the governor would support the school-choice referendum, which would allow some students at failing schools to use tax dollars to pay for private schools. Last September, however, Engler said that because of unfavorable polls, school choice in Michigan "has no hope." Since then he has actually worked to undermine the measure.

Engler's actions were an early sign that school choice could play a major role in this year's presidential election. Vice President Al Gore and Bill Bradley spent much of the Democratic primary season bickering over which of them hated school choice more. George W. Bush and John McCain also tussled with the issue. Bush has proposed awarding $1,500 vouchers to kids in the country's worst schools; McCain is likewise a school-choice booster, though he never outlined a specific plan. In the one non-presidential race that threatens to eclipse all others—Rudy vs. Hillary in New York—school choice is perhaps the candidates' sharpest policy difference. Giuliani has clamored on behalf of school choice for years, while the First Lady, with her teacher-union talking points in hand, apparently believes it's part of a vast conspiracy to destroy public education.

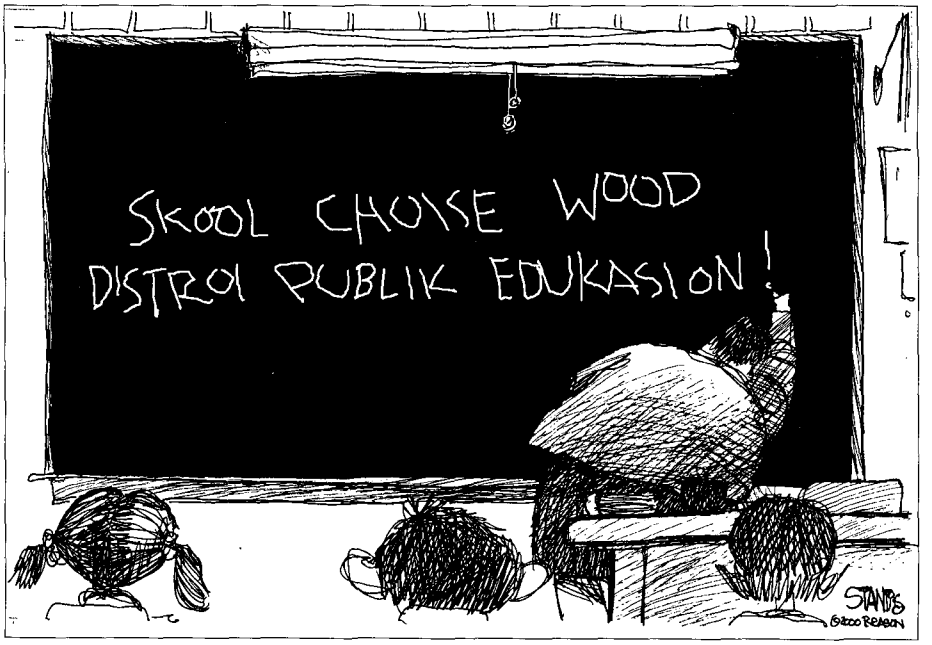
Every election cycle has its themes—the recession in 1992, the Clintons' health-care takeover in 1994, protecting federal entitlements in 1996, a stained blue dress in 1998. School choice has never risen to that level, even though the idea has been around for decades. Milton Friedman proposed that the government pay for education, but not dictate exactly where children receive their schooling, in his 1962 book *Capitalism and Freedom*. That provocative suggestion, however, didn't attract much notice outside right-wing cliques until the late 1980s.

Wisconsin passed a school-choice law limited to Milwaukee in 1990, Ohio adopted a program for Cleveland in 1995, and Florida approved a statewide plan last year (struck down in March by a state court). Otherwise, school choice has flopped politically. Congress has essentially ignored the matter, except to pass school choice for kids in the District of Columbia. President Clinton vetoed it. School choice seemed ready for prime time for most of the 1990s, but it hasn't yet gotten a national airing.

Michigan could start to change that. In January, supporters of the "Kids First! Yes!" initiative announced that they had gathered well beyond the nearly 303,000 signatures needed to put a question on the November ballot. The effort is also well funded—it raised more than $1 million in 1999 and hopes to bring in $5 million this year. The teacher unions will no doubt pour cash into their own campaign, but $5 million at least guarantees a pro–school choice message will be heard.

Much of the measure's financial muscle comes from people tied to Amway, which is based near Grand Rapids. Co-founder Richard DeVos and his wife Helen each gave $150,000 to the effort. Amway President Dick DeVos (their son) contributed $50,000. Elsa Prince, the mother of Dick's wife Betsy, sent in $200,000. There's heavy Catholic backing as well. The Detroit archdiocese put in $100,000, the Michigan Catholic Conference provided $25,000, and Domino's Pizza founder Tom Monahan, who plans to spend the rest of his life donating his fortune to Catholic causes, ponied up $100,000.

Michigan, as always, promises to be a vital national electoral battleground. Presidential candidates descending on the Wolverine State will be asked to announce their positions on the state's initiative. The next commander-in-chief might claim a



SCOTT STANTIS

school-choice mandate—either to promote it or to suppress it on the federal level. The coming battle in Michigan could well be a turning point for the whole movement.

That may not be good news. There is a strong chance the initiative will lose. But even if it passes, supporters could find themselves wondering why they fought so hard for so little.

Engler has a point about the politics. The school-choice polls in Michigan don't look promising. A *Detroit News* survey in September had the initiative leading 47 percent to 43 percent. Another one in January showed some improvement; school choice was ahead 53 percent to 23 percent, with 24 percent undecided. This is an uptick, but a weak showing overall. Support for ballot initiatives typically erodes over time. Their popularity tends to peak early, and then opponents identify particular problems with the way they are written. Those problems get voters thinking that while they may like the idea of an initiative in general, they may not like this *particular* proposal. To pass, initiatives generally need to begin a campaign with support in the 60 percent to 70 percent range. The most recent *Detroit News* poll, however, found those in favor of school choice dropping to just 42 percent after hearing a few arguments against the initiative—i.e., the sorts of things they'll hear from teacher-union ads in the fall.

A loss on school choice could affect other races, and perhaps in ways that school-choice supporters may not like. Although choice typically polls well across parties, almost all the muscle for it in Michigan comes from Republicans. (Indeed, that's why Engler's position is so newsworthy.) A Lansing polling firm has said that the initiative is likely to increase Republican voter turnout by 5 percent and Democratic turnout by 10 percent. It's likely that some of these Democrats—especially urban blacks, who in many ways have the most to gain from school choice—will vote in favor of the initiative. But that's far from certain.

More important to Engler's calculus, they probably won't go for a straight GOP ticket. Their presence would hurt Republican Sen. Spencer Abraham, who faces one of the toughest re-election races in the country against Democratic Rep. Debbie Stabenow. His loss would mean one less vote in the Senate for everything from a federal school-choice plan to education-savings accounts. And, on the eve of congressional redistricting, the GOP holds the governorship and state Senate, but maintains only a narrow lead in the state House of Representatives. A disastrous school-choice outing could cost a state Senate seat and make it impossible to redistrict House Minority Whip David Bonior out of office.

If the presidential race is close, too, a few votes in Michigan could make a big difference, sending 18 electoral votes toward Al Gore, a presidential candidate who is resolutely anti–school choice on every level except the personal (Gore's children have all attended exclusive private schools).

The next commander-in-chief might claim a school-choice mandate—either to promote it or to suppress it on the federal level. The coming battle in Michigan could well be a turning point for the whole movement.

Then there's the problem with winning. The initiative provides a voucher worth about $3,100—half of per-student public-school expenditures—to children in school districts that graduate fewer than two-thirds of their students. The money is certainly enough to cover all or most of tuition costs at most private schools. But the great majority of school districts graduate *more* than two-thirds of their students. Something like 30 of Michigan's 560 school districts would be covered. And Detroit—the grand prize of state school reform—might not be touched at all. Initiative supporters say that the Detroit district would have to allow choice, but others are less sure. The city's most recent reported graduation rate is 83 percent, although this is currently under review by the state education department. The initiative does allow other school districts to adopt choice following a vote of the school board or voters, but these small-scale local efforts would likely find themselves overwhelmed by the vast resources of the teacher unions.

The initiative language itself is problematic. It would require that the legislature "provide for regular testing of the knowledge in academic subjects" for all teachers in schools accepting vouchers. Here is the Achilles heel of the whole voucher effort, in Michigan and elsewhere: the prospect that new regulations will interfere with how private schools conduct themselves. One of the strengths of private schools, of course, is that they do not have to abide by the same rules as their public counterparts. If vouchers introduce new regulations—and we're not talking fire codes here—private schools begin to become quasi-public. Rather than leading to a deregulation of public schools, choice could lead to the regulation of private ones. This is one reason why the Association of Independent Michigan Schools hasn't endorsed the initiative.

To be sure, teacher testing is a long way from making nuns at Catholic schools hand out condoms, but libertarians know slippery slopes when they see them. Government control almost always follows government money. "We wouldn't want to open that door a crack," Ken Seward, head of Birmingham's prestigious Roeper School, told the *Detroit Free Press* in March.

Perhaps most important, it's not as if school reform is dead in Michigan, even without private-school choice. Hard-core choice advocates complain that Engler never has been much of a friend, telling activists with each new election cycle that the timing for school choice just isn't right. But, in fact, Engler has dramatically expanded school choice in Michigan—public school choice. Thanks largely to him, students can move freely within districts and even attend schools in adjoining ones.

There are some 170 charter schools now open for business, and they enroll about 50,000 kids. Engler is currently working to create more, and the only thing stopping him is a handful of dissident Republicans who have joined a unified Democratic front in opposing this variety of school choice. It could be argued that spending a portion of the money earmarked for the initiative to defeat these politicians might do more than a quixotic referendum to expand parent and student options or even offering private scholarships to poor kids as an act of philanthropy.

It's tempting to support the Michigan drive simply because of the people who oppose it. Last September, children at an elementary school in Rochester Hills were given anti–school choice flyers to take home to their parents. The flyers tendentiously labeled school choice a racist plot "to avoid desegregation" (in the 1950s) and even took a shot at Milton Friedman, whom they weirdly described as "best known to the world as the former economics advisor to Augusto Pinochet, the fascist dictator of Chile." Forget the Nobel Prize; meet Milton Friedman, crypto-Nazi.

But that really isn't good enough. California's 1993 school choice initiative, which lost by a 2-to-1 margin, saw ordinary Republican voters, along with virtually everyone else except for inner-city residents of all races, opposing the measure for an obvious reason: They were basically satisfied with their schools. Surveys show that parents tend to think other people's schools are a mess, but that the ones their kids attend are okay.

Opponents of the California initiative ran a "conservative" campaign against it, raising budgetary concerns, suggesting there was no problem to fix, and even hiring Republican operatives to craft these messages. Republican Gov. Pete Wilson came out against the proposition fairly late in the campaign; the biggest difference in Michigan may be that Engler has come out early. In March, he teamed up with state Democrats to pass a budget bill that warns public schools may lose some funding if voters approve the school-choice initiative. That's a gift for the teacher unions' fall campaign.

Engler makes a final point worth considering: It's still far from certain the Supreme Court will uphold school choice. Cleveland and Florida's programs are currently in litigation, and one of them will probably wind up before the Court in the next two years or so. Given the Court's current composition, odds are that the program will be upheld. But why should Michigan lay out $5 million now, as opposed to a couple of years from now, when the question of constitutionality is more settled? In fact, there may be a new justice on the court by then, appointed by President Gore. Another reason—and perhaps a decisive one—for Engler to make sure Michigan winds up in the GOP column in November. School choice just may be too important to run on this year.

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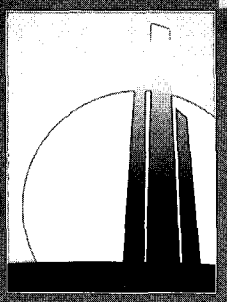

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United States Census 2000

Extra Long, Dumb, Paranoid Form

By Kurt Luchs

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☐ Blue
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☐ Hispanic
☐ Asian
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INCLUDE in this number:

- any children making running shoes in the basement sweatshop
- that guy who's been asleep on the couch for the last two days

DO NOT INCLUDE in this number:

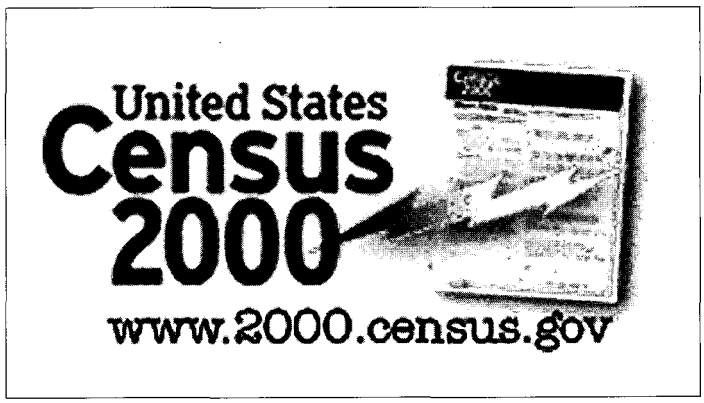
- imaginary friends
- the spirit of the homicidal 4,000-year-old Hittite demon you've been channeling

List of Persons

(or, in your case, Personalities)

Please print the names of all the people you indicated in Question 2 who were living or staying here on April 1, 2000—or at least sharing the same needles. Start with the person, or one of the people, living here who owns, is buying, or rents this house. If there is no such person, invent one. Your community needs more federal tax dollars!

Next, answer questions about Person 1. Person 1—your answers are important! Every person in the Census counts—unless they attended a public school, in which case they may not be able to.



What is this person's name? We know you already listed it earlier, but we're federal employees, for God's sake. You think we're going to lift a finger when we don't have to?

What is this person's telephone number? We may contact this person if we need to help fulfill an Immigration & Naturalization Service enforcement quota.

What is this person's sex? Mark ☒ ONE box.

☒ Male
☐ Female
☐ Janet Reno

What is this person's age in years?
Age on April 1, 2000: ☐☐

What is this person's age in dog years?
Age on April 1, 2000: ☐☐

NOTE: Please answer BOTH of the following questions. One answer may be more fun for us to pass around the office or tack on the lunchroom bulletin board.

Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?

☐ No, but prefers Menudo to Ricky Martin as a solo act
☐ Yes, but would like to forget about Menudo

What is this person's race? Mark ☒ ONE or more races to indicate what handouts you hope to qualify for.

☐ Dead white European male
☐ Person of color
☐ Person of many colors
☐ Person of one color but let's call it a Rainbow Coalition anyway
☐ Samoan
☐ Angry Samoan

If Japanese, indicate what type of containment windows you prefer if it should become necessary—again—to use this information to lock you in an internment camp during wartime:

☐ Barred
☒ Unbreakable wire mesh

What is this person's marital status?

☐ Now married
☒ Widowed
If so, caused by
☐ Death
☒ Football
☐ Separated
☐ Limbs separated from trunk, sealed in

jumbo-size freezer bags and ready for night burial
☐ Never married
If so,
☒ Too smart
☐ Too ugly
☒ Both

At any time since February 1, 2000, has this person attended regular school or college?
☐ No
☐ Yes
☐ I attended a regular school or college and thus am unable to comprehend this question

If yes, did he or she make it through
☐ the school year
☐ the school day
☐ the metal detector

What is the highest degree or level of school this person has COMPLETED?
☐ Doctorate degree (for example, "Dr. Mom")
☐ Professional degree (for example, "Welcome to McDonald's, may I take your order please?")
☐ Master's degree (for example, the one that allows Kathie Lee Gifford to own slaves)
☐ Bachelor's degree (for example, Richard Simmons)
☐ Associate degree (don't bother, nobody cares)
☐ 1 or more years of college, mostly drugs
☒ Some college credit but less than 1 year, mostly alcohol
☐ High school diploma or the equivalent (for example, "Would you like some fries with that?")
☒ 12th grade, no diploma (see: loser)
☐ 11th grade, knocked up (see: loser with boyfriend)
☒ 10th grade, rag soaked with airplane glue stuck on face
☐ 9th grade, killed along with other freshmen in bizarre hazing accident
☐ 7th or 8th grade, then straight to Kathie Lee's sweatshop
☐ 5th or 6th grade, then straight to Congress
☐ Nursery school to 4th grade (i.e., human resources manager)
☐ No schooling completed (may run as candidate for either major party)

Is this person a CITIZEN of the United States?
☐ Yes, born in the United States
☒ Yes, born on an inner tube within swimming distance of Miami
☐ Not really, but what the hell, Yes

Does this person have any of his/her own grandchildren under the age of 18 living in this house or apartment?
☐ Well, *somebody* is stealing the change out of my dresser drawer
☐ Don't know, never go near the basement except to slide table scraps under the door

How long has this grandparent been responsible for the(se) grandchild(ren)?
☐ 5 years or more
☒ 1 to 4 years
☐ Since they were pushed from a moving convertible onto the front lawn this morning

Has this person ever served on active duty in the
☐ U.S. Army?
☐ Salvation Army?
☐ Kiss Army?

Just in case this person ever does serve in the military, their preferred policy toward gays is
☐ Don't ask, don't tell
☒ Don't ask, but do tell

In total, how many years of active-duty military service has this person had?
☐ 2 years or more
☐ Less than 2 years
☐ Less than 2 months
☐ Gulf War (2 weeks)
☒ Grenada (2 days)

During the past 4 weeks, has this person been looking for
☐ Work
☒ Food
☐ Their "Will Work For Food" sign

When did this person last work, even for a few days?
☐ 1995 to 2000
☐ 1994 or earlier, or never worked, or worked in Post Office or for Census Bureau

How many nonfunctioning automobiles, vans, or trucks are rusting on blocks in your front yard?
☐ 1 to 2
☐ 3 to 5
☐ 6 or more
If so, do they contain
☐ Old clothes
☒ Old clothes on dead bodies

Are there more people living here? If yes, continue with Person 2.

How is this person related to Person 1?
☐ Husband/wife
☐ Brother/sister
☐ Husband/wife AND brother/sister
☐ Other relative—print exact relationship and position on evolutionary tree

If NOT RELATED to Person 1:
☒ Roomer, boarder
☐ Moocher, lowlife
☐ Other nonrelative
☐ Nonhuman
☐ Ex-wife

For Person 2 and Persons 3–6, repeat all previous questions, only at gunpoint.

Thank you for completing your official U.S. Census form. If there are more than six people at this address, the Census Bureau may contact you for more information about these people, or if we are really, really busy that day, we may let our friends at the INS, the FBI, or the BATF handle it for us. ◆

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
☐ Probable user
☐ Probable dealer
☐ Probable drug kingpin
☐ Candidate for tax audit
☐ Candidate for INS inspection

Kurt Luchs (kurtluchs@aol.com) contributes regularly to The Onion *(www.theonion.com) and* The Late Late Show with Craig Kilborn. *He has also written for* The New Yorker, McSweeney's, Slate, *and* IndiePlanet.com. *Despite the negative views expressed here, he swears he did return his Census form, but suspects that maybe the Post Office lost it.*

Walter Olson

A Smith & Wesson FAQ

A gun deal with many losers

Q: So they pressured Smith & Wesson into accepting gun control in the form of a lawsuit settlement. We should be glad, right?

A: Sure, unless you're in the gun business or think you might need to defend yourself with a gun someday. Or unless you're someone who cares about the Constitution and the abuse of the legal system.

Q: You sound upset.

A: We all should be. Even if you don't care about the freedom and rule-of-law stuff, this deal could actually raise the number of people hurt because of gun malfunctions.

Q: That can't be. Seasoned firearms experts like Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Andrew Cuomo assure us that the next generation of "smart guns" won't let the wrong person fire them, because they'll have little computers inside.

A: Probably technology like that will be worth a look at some point down the road. But very few handgun buyers are willing to be beta volunteers during the debugging period. Think of the many glitches and crashes you get with ordinary software that runs on a dry desktop and gets upgraded every year or two. Think how often your supermarket's checkout scanner fails to read a product code, forcing the cashier to swipe the item three or four times or punch the code in manually. Then think about miniaturizing those technologies into a product expected to last for decades amid dust, humidity, and temperature extremes.

Legitimate users may have more to worry about here than criminals do. If you're planning to use a handgun in a crime, you may be willing to fiddle with the controls until you get past the tiny "try again" error readout. If you're keeping it for emergency defensive use, this kind of General Protection Fault could be fatal.

Q: If that happened to me, do you think some trial lawyer would be willing to help my survivors sue the gun maker?

A: Probably. Ironic, isn't it? We're debating whether an industry should begin marketing a risky new technology before it's clear how and whether it will work. There's a paper trail of doubts from engineers who think the technology won't be reliable and that innocent people will get hurt, and at this point we lack even prototypes, let alone mass testing. Normally the trial lawyers yell for punitive damages if a company rushes that kind of new technology to market. Instead gun makers now face legal assault if they don't.

Q: Maybe we could try out smart gun technology for a while with sportsmen who don't expect to need their guns on an emergency basis.

A: Cuomo & Co. aren't planning to leave you that option. Their S&W deal contemplates withdrawing standard gun designs from the market after enough makers sign on. It's like the way all car buyers were forced to buy airbags, except that by comparison airbags were a proven and innocuous technology. By the way, police forces will be allowed exemptions so they can go on buying the old designs, since they need their guns to work reliably.

CHIP BOK

Q: Wasn't there anyone at the negotiating table to speak up for civilian consumers?

A: You're kidding, right? Brokering a deal like this through lawsuits lets you exclude whole categories of pesky participants from the settlement room. The S&W deal provides that buyers won't be able to get guns unless they've completed certified safety classes—which is pointless harassment from the standpoint of veterans who don't need a refresher, and downright menacing to women trying to buy their first gun to protect themselves from a stalker or a violent husband.

Q: Who else was kept out of the settlement room?

A: Dealers. The S&W pact commits the company to sell only through dealers who've agreed to a long list of controls on their own activities, including putting their employees through approved train-

ing courses, removing from their stock various perfectly lawful weapons that the Clinton administration dislikes, and not selling at gun shows unless everyone else there likewise submits to various controls that go beyond federal law. In addition, because of a clause giving regulators access to any and all dealer documents they deem necessary to determine compliance, many dealership records will wind up in regulators' hands without the need for a warrant.

Q: Wouldn't it be easier for a dealer to drop the S&W line?

A: The Clinton administration was counting on S&W's status as the number one gun maker. Having absorbed that variety of antitrust analysis that describes a manufacturer as "controlling" a certain market share, the president's men thought helpless buyers would have no place to go. They figured they could leverage S&W's market share through what amounts to a tying arrangement: If dealers and gun shows wanted to stock the dominant manufacturer's line, they'd have to agree to stop promoting disfavored, competitive product lines.

Q: Wait a minute. Isn't that kind of like what Microsoft did to Netscape?

A: Yep. Tying arrangements aimed at excluding competitive products from the market are bad, bad, bad when dominant companies attempt them on their own. But very similar arrangements are to be applauded when companies do them in collusion with state attorneys general and cabinet secretaries.

Q: How did the tying arrangement work?

A: It was an instant flop. Rather than allow someone else's legal needs to dictate their business practices and inventory, many dealers resolved to drop the S&W product line. Instead of the race to settle that the gun suit organizers expected, they got a race to break ties with the (former) market leader. Aside from the dealers who jumped ship, some organizers of shooting matches have told S&W that it is no longer welcome, and other gun companies stopped coordinating their legal defense efforts with S&W, which meant it had to find a new law firm.

Q: What happened then? Did the anti-gun side admit it had miscalculated?

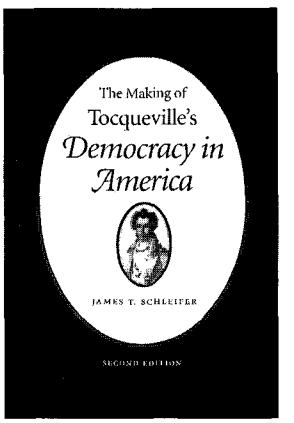
A: You're not going to believe this part. Several of the most combative state attorneys general, including Connecticut's Richard Blumenthal and New York's Eliot Spitzer, announced that they were going to sue the gun industry for not cooperating with S&W. On antitrust grounds, no less. This may be the first antitrust action in history aimed at smaller companies that refused to enter into tying arrangements with the dominant manufacturer in their market. It's a purely political move, meant to punish the still-free portions of the gun industry for their determination to remain free.

In addition to the business reasons for dropping S&W products, there was a huge amount of anger at the company within the industry for its perceived betrayal. The droves of consumers who were vowing never to buy another gun

Modern Editions of Classic Works for Readers Today

THE MAKING OF TOCQUEVILLE'S "DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA"
Second Edition

By James T. Schleifer
Foreword by George W. Pierson



It is impossible to fully understand the American experience apart from Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. Moreover, it is impossible to fully appreciate Tocqueville by assuming that he brought to his visitation to America, or to the writing of his great work, a fixed philosophical doctrine. James T. Schleifer documents where, when, and under what influences Tocqueville wrote different sections of his work. In doing so, Schleifer discloses the mental processes through which Tocqueville passed in reflecting on his experiences in America and transforming these reflections into the most original and revealing book every written about Americans. As Russell B. Nye has observed, "Schleifer's study is a model of intellectual history, an account of the intertwining of a man, a set of ideas, and the final product, a book." The Liberty Fund second edition includes a new preface by the author and an epilogue, "The Problem of the *Two Democracies*."

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from "Clinton & Wesson" probably also encouraged dealers to dissociate themselves from the company.

Q: That seems kind of hard on poor old S&W, doesn't it? It was just trying to save its skin, not endorse gun control in principle.

A: In practice, the deal—which specifies that it can be enforced against S&W both as a contract and as a court settlement—does seem to align the company, against its will or not, with hard-line anti-gun sentiment. For example, S&W agrees to work "to support legislative efforts to reduce firearm misuse." It's not hard to guess what the signatories on the other side intend by such language, and it's sobering to think that in the future S&W might be held in violation of a court order (and also in breach of a contract) should it honestly and publicly say that some anti-gun legislative scheme is a bad idea. There are also widespread suspicions that "educational" aspects of the settlement, such as the establishment of a manufacturer-funded "education trust fund" and the provision of mandatory training and safety leaflets for customers, will become channels for the dissemination of anti-gun propaganda, paid for at one remove by buyers of S&W guns.

These suspicions are intensified by the pact's establishment of an Oversight Commission with which S&W "pledges to cooperate fully" and which will be empowered to oversee the agreement's implementation. The five members of the commission will be selected as follows: one by gun makers; one by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; two by city and county parties; and one by state parties. This commission will thus start out with a 4-to-1 majority favoring gun control, which will at best shift to a 3-to-2 majority in favor of gun control even if a libertarian president and Congress get elected tomorrow and name P.J. O'Rourke as the new head of the BATF.

The Oversight Commission's three-member working majority will *not* be selected by, or reflect the views of, a cross-section of American voters, but only those of the lawsuit "parties," which consist of various big cities and a few liberal states. Remarkably, cities such as Miami and Bridgeport, whose suits have already been thrown out as meritless by state judges, *do* get important voices in the new ruling junta that will enforce rules for gun buying nationwide. Yet the rest of the country is consigned to, at best, a permanently outvoted minority role.

Q: It sounds as if you're about to go off on an "end run around democracy" tear again.

A: It shouldn't be left to libertarians to voice qualms about the way major law-making proposals that had been brought up and specifically rejected in Congress and many state legislatures can be rammed through by force of litigation. But it seems most commentators' reaction to the agreement simply hinged on whether they liked its substantive content or not; if you're for gun control, it seems, you're for it no matter how it is achieved.

Legislation-by-lawsuit allows another end run around constitutional review. We saw this first in the tobacco round, where the settlement included curbs on advertising that would have been unconstitutional if they had been imposed directly by lawmakers (or courts, for that matter). When it's done through a lawsuit settlement, not only are the rights deemed waived, but interested third parties, such as magazines that might have a stake in the right to advertise, lack "standing" to challenge the deal. Now we see the same sort of thing in the gun round. Had the Cuomo-Spitzer-Blumenthal package of gun controls been enacted through legislation, Second Amendment advocates might have hoped to get courts to strike down parts of it, such as the restrictions on taking possession of handguns. But doing it through a lawsuit settlement may insulate such provisions from constitutional review.

Even if you don't care about the freedom and rule-of-law stuff, this deal could actually raise the number of people hurt because of gun malfunctions.

The gun suits are also a textbook example of the gross abuse of litigation in a system that lacks any semblance of a loser-pays principle. Yale *law professor* Peter Schuck told *The New York Times* that he "doubts [Smith & Wesson] would have lost a court case" had matters reached trial. Indeed, several municipal gun suits had been thrown out already. Yet these often-wealthy cities faced no risk at all of having to compensate the far smaller, often family-owned gun companies with whom they'd picked a fight. Several gun makers have gone bankrupt since the legal onslaught began, and even Smith & Wesson's continued ability to function was in doubt.

Until quite recently in legal history, the use of litigation costs as a weapon to pry concessions from an opponent was considered unethical. Now they're boasting about it. Cuomo warned gun makers that unless they cooperated they'd suffer "death by a thousand cuts." "If you don't sign," said Spitzer at a press conference, referring to holdout Glock, "your bankruptcy lawyers will be knocking at your door." Who says there are no Ayn Rand villains in real life?

And with all that, Smith & Wesson has not bought and cannot buy peace. Initial reports portrayed Cuomo as vainly imagining that he could "deliver" the settlement signatures of the 30 mayors who have sued so far, most of whom have hired outside trial lawyers. Shortly after, this theme was quietly dropped as it became apparent that up to half the cities weren't taking the deal. Josh Horwitz, executive director for the Educational Fund to End Handgun Violence, which represents some of the cities, explained that the cities were not dropping their suits in part because the deal "does not contain any monetary damages." Observes gun scholar David Kopel, "In the long term, S&W has increased the chances that it, along with every other handgun manufacturer, will be destroyed." ◆

Contributing Editor Walter Olson (wo@walterolson.com) is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and edits the Web site Overlawyered.com.

What Should We Tell Our Kids About Drugs, AIDS and Needle Exchange?

THE TRUTH. Drugs are dangerous. One of the greatest dangers is the spread of HIV / AIDS. Needle exchanges prevent the spread of HIV among drug users and the general population where it is spread through sexual contact.

THE FACTS ON NEEDLE EXCHANGE

- According to Donna Shalala, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, "A meticulous scientific review has now proven that needle exchange programs can reduce the transmission of HIV and save lives without losing ground in the battle against illegal drugs."

  Source: Shalala, D.E., Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, Press release from Department of Health and Human Services, (1998, April 20).

- "To date, nearly 40% of the 652,000 cases of AIDS reported in the United States have been linked to injection drug use. And more than 75% of babies diagnosed with HIV / AIDS were infected as a direct or indirect result of injection drug use by a parent."

  Source: Press release from Department of Health and Human Services, (1998, April 20).

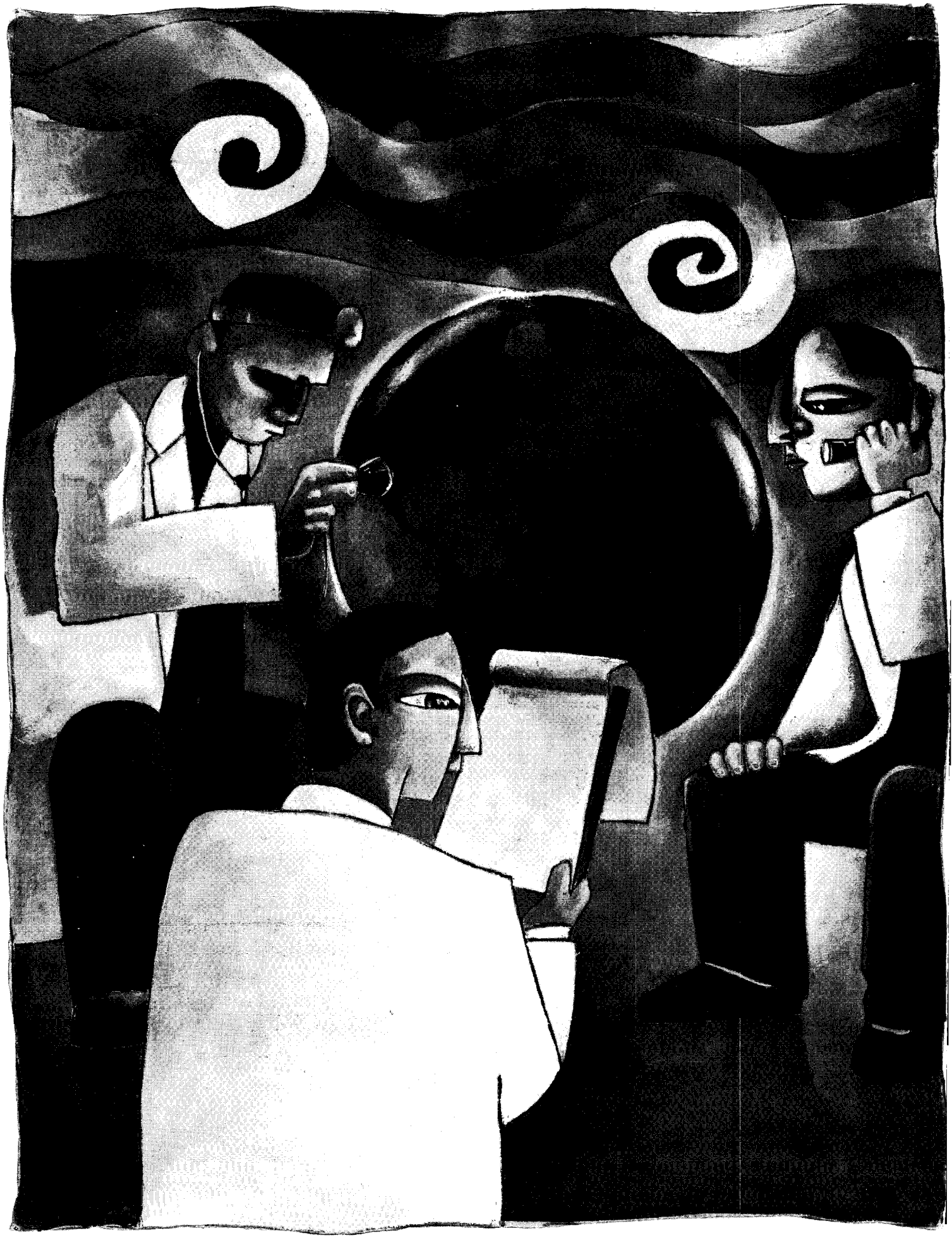
- In 1996, 63% of the 375 new AIDS cases reported among children under age 13 were injection-related.

  Source: Based on the number of new AIDS cases among children under age 13 for which the exposure group was known. Centers for Disease Control, HIV / AIDS Surveillance Report, (Year-end edition), Vol. 8, No. 2.

Our Children Can Understand the Truth. Politicians should stop hiding behind children if they oppose needle exchange.

For more information visit: http://www.csdp.org.

Common Sense for Drug Policy, Kevin B. Zeese, President
703-354-9050, 703-354-5695 (fax), info@csdp.org



Good News, Bad News

By Michael Fumento

Earth Report 2000, edited by Ronald Bailey, New York: McGraw-Hill, 362 pages, $19.95
State of the World 2000, by Lester R. Brown et al., New York: W.W. Norton, 276 pages, $14.95

You can get a quick handle on these two new books about Earth's environmental health by imagining them as science fiction movies. *Earth Report 2000*, edited by REASON Science Correspondent Ronald Bailey for the Washington, D.C.–based Competitive Enterprise Institute, would be a *Star Trek* film: The collection presents an essentially rosy future with problems that human ingenuity eventually solves. *State of the World 2000*, put together by Lester Brown and the Worldwatch Institute, would be *Blade Runner*: It imagines a dark, dreary world where it's always raining and the sidewalks are so crowded that you have to walk on cars to get anywhere.

Yet pairing these books is appropriate, since *Earth Report 2000* and its predecessor, *The True State of the Planet* (1995), were written as a foil to Worldwatch's yearly tidings of gloom. Bailey's book asks, contra Worldwatch, Can things be all that bad? He and his colleagues find that a brighter environmental future is possible if fresh ideas and free markets are permitted to take their course.

The philosophy Bailey and his writers espouse is known as free market environmentalism—the belief that private markets and property-rights enforcement are a more certain and less costly means of preserving the ecosystem than central government control. Thus, if everybody "owns" African elephants, then nobody really does and nobody has a special incentive to protect them. Grant ownership of the elephants to a tribe and they will protect them as fiercely as a farmer protects his hogs or chickens. It's growing not just as an intellectual movement but in application, and has even been given a bit of a nod by a few major green groups.

Bailey's own essay, "The Progress Explosion: Permanently Escaping the Malthusian Trap," is one of the best ripostes to Malthusian theory around. Thomas Malthus, writing in the 18th century, predicted that population would inevitably outstrip food supply, because he believed the former grows exponentially while the latter grows only arithmetically. "Two centuries after Malthus," notes Bailey, "it is now clear that the exponential growth of knowledge, not population, is the real key to understanding the future of humanity and the earth."

Malthus' prediction is simply wrong. Neo-Malthusians, smart enough to see that reality has made a mockery of Malthus' dark fantasy, have fallen back on a different but equally glum contention: Forget that part about food supplies, they say; growing population will instead outstrip our supply of all other natural resources. Much of *Earth Report 2000* duels with the neo-Malthusians on these grounds. A clear look at the current record suggests many reasons for optimism.

One especially positive chapter is about garbage, of all things. Written by Reason Public Policy Institute Executive Director Lynn Scarlett, "Doing More with Less" shows how packagers keep finding ingenious ways to "dematerialize" products—to do the same, or more, using less material. Scarlett writes, "A basket of typical U.S. grocery items fell from over 2,750 pounds of packaging per gross production unit in 1989 to approximately 2,100 pounds in 1993–1994." Thus packaging becomes less of a disposal dilemma each year.

What drives this dematerialization? Neither command-and-control environmental dictates nor corporate goodheartedness. The real motive is the classic one of economizing. Use less material, and you save money on transportation and warehousing, on the cost of the material itself, and on the energy cost of making the product. Scarlett describes an elegantly interdependent business venture in Scandanavia, one that conserves resources precisely *because* it boosts productivity.

"In Kalundbor, Denmark, in the 1980s, Asnaes, a large coal-fired electricity-generating plant, began providing process steam to a refinery and a pharmaceutical plant located nearby," she writes. "The refinery, in turn, provides cooling water and purified wastewater to Asnaes. A wallboard producer, Gyproc, had long been buying surplus gas from the refinery; Asnaes joined in the purchase of surplus gas in 1991, absorbing all the refinery's surpluses and reducing its need for coal by 30,000 tons per year. Purchase of the surplus gas by Asnaes became possible when the refinery began removing excess sulfur in the gas. The 'waste' sulfur was, in turn, sold to a sulfuric acid plant. Asnaes also uses surplus heat to warm a seawater fish farm, which produces trout and turbot primarily for French markets. Sludge generated at the fish farm becomes fertilizer for local farmers."

Could the best and brightest at our Environmental Protection Agency or Denmark's equivalent bureaucracy have thought of something so intricate and yet so efficient? It's highly unlikely.

As in *Star Trek*, despite the generally sunny and positive outlook on the future, a crisis-producing menace threatens. The Borg Collective of Bailey & Co.'s free market environmental vision goes by the name of Government Regulations. No-

MATTHEW BAEK

where is this more evident than in Michael De Alessi's chapter, "Fishing for Solutions." De Alessi, director of the Center for Private Conservation, discusses one of the Worldwatch Institute's bogeymen, overfishing. He discovers that, although it's not the crisis Worldwatch thinks, overfishing is indeed worrisome in some areas. But De Alessi finds that property rights, when allowed to work, have proven the most efficient means of coping with overfishing.

Maryland, for example, tries to limit oyster catches by allowing fishermen to use only decades-old sailing ships, making it America's most backward fishing industry. Yet overfishing of oysters continues to the point where harvests are at 1 percent of historic levels. Similarly, Alaska tried to impose limits on halibut catches by progressively shortening the fishing season, all the way down to a mere two days. That didn't stop industrious fishermen from making a season's haul in 48 frantic, dangerous hours.

Conversely, where waters and beds have been allocated to private parties, as in Washington state, harvests have exploded, with the haul doubling since heavy-handed regulations enacted in the 1970s were lifted. New Zealand began using transferable quotas (legal allocations, which can be bought and sold, of certain numbers of fish that can be caught) in 1986 and saw its total marine catch go from fewer than 180,000 metric tons that year to a net-ripping 452,000 by 1995.

A favorite mantra of the free market environmentalist is that "wealth equals health." Indur Goklany, a researcher at the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Policy Analysis, takes that argument further in his chapter "Richer Is More Resilient." He argues that a wealthy country isn't just a healthier country but also a cleaner one—and also more able to deal with adversity such as natural disasters.

While global warming as an overhyped threat is dealt with at length in other sections of this book, Goklany is most inventive in using it as a standard by which improvements in industrialization and wealth should be measured. In other words, assuming that global warming *is* taking place and will cause problems, he shows that such potential problems—increased disease, higher sea levels, etc.—are easily outweighed by the benefits of industrializing. Goklany notes, for example, that though Hurricane Mitch hitting relatively undeveloped Central America in 1998 killed 10,000 people, Tropical Storm Claudette, dropping the same amount of rain, killed only nine in wealthier Texas.

Other chapters run the gamut of popular environmental fears and fancies, from government-sponsored "soft" energy to endocrine-disrupting chemicals to the population explosion to species extinction. In every case Bailey's authors present convincing, well-documented arguments that the fears are unwarranted and that state-directed solutions do not solve problems, and may even create them.

Fittingly, *Earth Report 2000* opens with CEI President Fred Smith's affectionate tribute to the late Julian Simon, the University of Maryland professor who was a tireless advocate for the idea that the ultimate resource is not minerals or food or water but the human mind and its ability to learn, adapt, and innovate. *Earth Report 2000* concludes with dozens of charts indicating that it's OK to keep saving for retirement. Not only is the end of the world not nigh, in many ways the environment and our ability to sustain it keep getting better by the year.

The Worldwatch crew no longer talks of fossil fuels running out or $3-a-gallon gasoline. These days, the very abundance of fossil fuels is posited as the problem.

The book ignores, though, an essential topic that has already affected, or will soon affect, many of its concerns: biotechnology. Biotech (the subject of a book I am now writing) will affect our environmental future everywhere from packaging (making new plastic packaging materials out of plants) to food (tremendously increasing the per-acre yields of farmland). That criticism aside, this is a smart, useful book—proof of its own assertion that ideas are the greatest natural resource.

As for *The State of the World 2000*, what can you say about a book that says the Luddites were really good guys, just misunderstood? The Worldwatch mavens dismiss progress as "nonsustainable" and propose "solutions" that may advance regulatory regimes but do nothing for humans or the environment.

Traditional environmentalists, such as those at Worldwatch, are just that—traditional. While they may sometimes favor regulations that allow industry to choose the cheapest and most efficient course of action in protecting natural resources, they have undiminished faith in the government (federal rather than state or local) to set standards even when powerful scientific evidence indicates those standards are needless or even do more harm to the environment than good.

The book gets off to an inauspicious start, claiming that, when the first edition appeared in 1984, there were "record rates of population growth, soaring oil prices, debilitating levels of international debt, and extensive damage to forests from the new phenomenon of acid rain." Back then, though, writes Brown and his two co-editors, at least there was hope that things would be considerably improved by the end of the century. So has the world improved at all over the past 16 years? "Far from it," declare Brown and company.

Really? By 1984 population growth rates were already below their record levels, and since then they have plummeted around the world (if anything, it's the specter of depopulation that haunts many nations). Oil prices had long since stopped soaring by 1984, despite Brown's bold declaration in 1980 that "it would be prudent for any American contemplating the purchase of a new car to assume that gas will cost $2 per gallon within a few years and $3 per gallon during the vehicle's lifetime." Notwithstanding the recent spike in gas prices, by last year inflation-adjusted gas prices were as low as they've ever been.

Although Worldwatch has been a loud

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voice in the chorus exaggerating the effects of acid rain, even *The State of the World* admits that the main constituent of acid rain, sulfur dioxide emissions, has been declining in the developed world. It also admits forest growth is booming in the Northern Hemisphere—but says that doesn't count because so much of the forest is commercially used. While it's true that forests are shrinking in the Southern Hemisphere, that's mostly because of government incentives to slash and burn them away. But don't look for a discussion of that from Brown and friends.

Worldwatch suffers from an ailment common among environmentalist groups: an acute allergy to good news. The book begrudgingly admits that the wretched hand of starvation has essentially lost its bony grip on the earth, but says it has only been replaced by the new problem of obesity, even in underdeveloped countries. Sure, obesity is a problem (I wrote a book on it, *The Fat of the Land*), but wouldn't this have been an appropriate place to acknowledge that the Malthusian predictions put out by the Worldwatch Institute and others (such as Paul and Anne Ehrlich) were completely wrong?

Unlike *Earth Report 2000, State of the World 2000* mentions biotech agriculture in three places, twice neutrally but once surprisingly favorably. It says it "may reduce insecticide use." Actually, it has done so remarkably where applied. Further, it says biotech "offers little potential for raising yields." That it's already doing so in the United States is somehow missed. Every single crop problem the book mentions—such as salinization of irrigated lands, the declining availability of fresh water, and the problem of getting enough calories but not enough of the right nutrients—are already being targeted by biotech botanists. For example, a variety of rice and of canola are already in test plots that will pack vitamin A—desperately lacking in the Third World—into the crops.

A common theme throughout the *State of the World* series is that no problem is really on its way to being solved, as much as it may seem that way. Hence, starvation has been replaced by obesity. Sure, massive overpopulation dooming us all to the living space of a Manhattan cockroach no longer looms large. Now the real problem is that the ecosystem can't handle the numbers we have now.

Similarly, the Worldwatch crew no longer talks of fossil fuels running out or $3-a-gallon gasoline. These days, the very abundance of fossil fuels is posited as the problem, since burning them allegedly causes global warming. So we're given a lengthy treatise on the wonders of "soft energy," without being given the per-kilowatt costs that Jerry Taylor and Peter VanDoren of the Cato Institute offer in *Earth Report 2000.* Taylor and VanDoren find, for example, that while "soft energy advocates and the Department of Energy continue to confidently assert that wind power will soon dominate the U.S. energy market...wind-driven electricity from the very best locations" is triple the price of existing underutilized fossil fuel generation. Worldwatch is especially tickled by wind energy, even though it's far more efficient at killing predator birds than producing electricity (the Sierra Club has dubbed wind towers "Cuisinarts of the air").

As in any compilation by diverse authors, the quality of *State of the World 2000* can't be consistently bad. "Harnessing Information Technologies for the Environment" by Molly O'Meara is worth a read, though it gives the idea that these technologies emanate from the ether rather than from entrepreneurs. The chapter on "micropower"—fuel cells and other small-wattage, decentralized power plants—is fascinating and carries only trace amounts of green polemic. Indeed, the advantages of micropower mimic the advantages of a decentralized energy strategy and the general decentralization of approaches to environmental problems.

In fact, a consistent emphasis on decentralization—and the discovery processes it fosters—is exactly what you *get* in Bailey's book and what's lacking in the Worldwatch Institute's. "We know how to keep the Malthusian trap from closing," Bailey concludes in *Earth Report 2000.* "Humanity, represented by our governments and international agencies, must make sure that individuals, corporations, and research institutions have strong incentives to explore, discover, and invent the innovations that will supply our future energy, agricultural, medical, and materials needs."

Generally speaking, that means getting out of the way of entrepreneurs and ignoring the doomsayers whose recommendations usually lead only to more roadblocks on those entrepreneurs' paths. While that message is slowly gaining ground, it's sorely missing from *State of the World 2000.*

Michael Fumento is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C. His most recent book is The Fat of the Land: Our Health Crisis and How Overweight Americans Can Help Themselves *(Viking). His Web site is www.fumento.com.*

Not-So-Grand Plan

By Tom Peyser

The New City, by Stephen Amidon, New York: Doubleday, 445 pages, $24.95

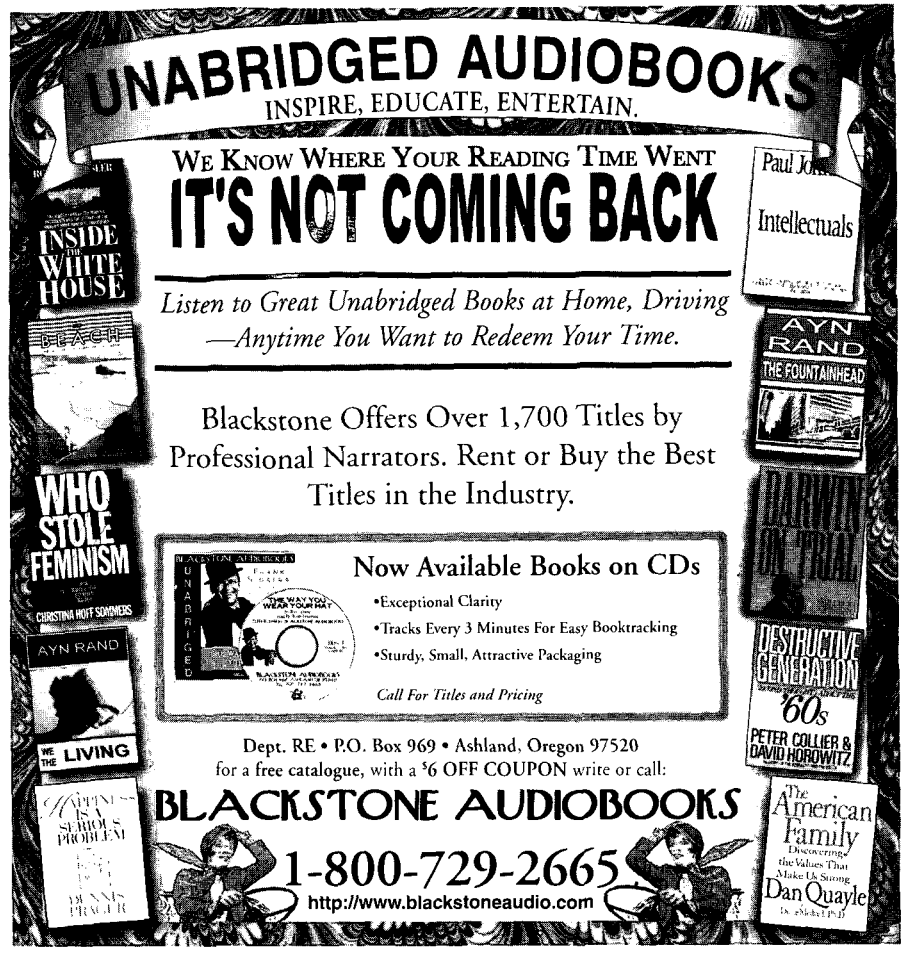
In 1971, when novelist Stephen Amidon was 12 years old, he moved with his family from suburban New Jersey to Columbia, Maryland, a "model town" founded on the idea that comprehensive, centralized city planning opened the royal road to improved quality of life. According to Amidon, Columbia was a "social experiment, a city where poor, rich, black and white were supposed to commingle in near-perfect harmony." Looking back on it now, he sees the city, with its "dizzying, naive optimism," as "a distillation of the country's values and recent history." Amidon's lumbering new novel *The New City* is clearly based in part on his teenage impressions of Columbia. (The book's press kit includes the autobiographical state-

ment I just quoted.) That being the case, we have to conclude that he finds the country's avowed values fraudulent and its recent history a disaster. Although Amidon seems unusually determined—even for a young American novelist—to believe the very worst of the United States, his latest book is worth taking seriously, if only because it reflects many fundamental attitudes of the disaffected in the generation that will be taking over soon.

As its title suggests, *The New City* tries to capture the emergence of a new way to plan social space. Set in the early '70s, its action unfolds at the moment that ideas now associated with "the New Urbanism" started taking shape as a leading orthodoxy. The New Urbanism is the planning establishment's attempt to atone for the disasters it wrought in the name of urban renewal and related movements. (See "Dense Thinkers," January 1999.)

In older cities, its advocates foster the creation of the kind of high-density, multiuse neighborhoods that their predecessors razed to make room for immense housing projects and downtown arteries (this time, say the planners, we'll get it right). In new developments, like the one depicted in *The New City*, New Urbanists try to combat what they see as the baleful influence of "sprawl," which they dislike more for ideological reasons than for pragmatic ones. What they call sprawl, after all, is often the market's way of responding to the large number of people who want a house on a bit of land (which is inevitably cheaper on the outskirts of developed areas). But that means that these people will drive *en famille* to the store, the school, and the dentist, instead of doing the virtuous, democratic thing by taking the bus or tram with their fellow citizens.

To New Urbanists, "sprawl" implies individualism and not collectivism, and for that reason it is unacceptable. City planning is often a stalking horse for social engineering; as a characteristic manifesto of New Urbanism declares, "Community planning and design must assert the importance of public over private values." *The New City*, however, is not a paean to the virtues of planning. It's more of an elegy: Amidon's bedrock, if paradoxical, assumption is that centralized control of development is both necessary and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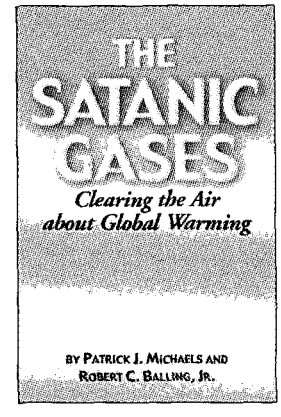

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doomed to failure. That such a dark vision is based on a fundamentally false premise does nothing to lighten the ostentatious blackness of his despair.

The New City takes place in fictional Newton, Maryland, circa 1973. The plot centers on the families of Austin Swope, the man whom Newton's corporate backers have put in charge of the development, and Earl Wooten, his chief foreman. The friendship between the men and their wives is cemented by their teenage sons, Teddy and Joel, who themselves become best friends roaming through the half-built town and daring each other to jump from the roofs of construction sites. There are no fences, the streets are lined with quaint gas lamps, and, in keeping with anti-car ideology, "you're never more than a quarter mile from a playground or park."

There is, however, a serpent in this Eden. The Swopes are white. The Wootens are black. Once Joel Wooten gets in trouble for his intimacy with a white girl, and once Austin hears a rumor that his employers are plotting to give Earl, instead of him, the coveted job of city manager, the races close ranks, and the horn of plenty is undone.

In the end, Amidon is willing to sacrifice his characters and plot to his big idea: Consciousness of race poisons everything in American life. It overrides every principle and undermines every bond. As is so often the case in novels with a tendentious case to prove, at a certain point in *The New City* characters stop acting in accord with what we have been shown of their nature, and start acting in the way that they must if the truth of the Thesis is to be confirmed. In the final chapters, Amidon seems almost wholly taken up with the task of getting his characters to bump into each other at precisely the moment that will yield the highest return of poetic justice or bitter irony. At such moments one wishes that Amidon had written the straightforward melodrama that *The New City* at times resembles.

Surprisingly, given his palpable ambition to say something about the latest phase of suburbia, Amidon does not seem very interested in creating a sense of place. After a few shrewd, early scenes showing how in planned communities something as simple as building a wall can become the subject of endless, touchy negotiation, the plot almost wholly detaches itself from its environment, and the spruce enclave becomes little more than a painted backdrop for a series of increasingly lurid confrontations.

As a result, Amidon has produced a novel in which an attempt at serious social commentary is to some degree trivialized by the sensationalism that surrounds it. Unlike the Roman Polanski film *Chinatown* (1974), from which Amidon for a second time borrows the idea of using public utilities as a symbol of pervasive ill (the first was in his 1993 novel *Thirst*), *The New City* never forges a compelling bond between the tragedy played out by its characters and the larger world in which it is enmeshed.

In fact, most things in *The New City* do not seem very new. Even the characters are secondhand, from principals such as the wounded vet haunted by memories of 'Nam down to the supporting cast, which includes both a "wizened old-timer" and a "wily old country lawyer." Ironically, that unoriginality is what makes the novel sadly fascinating: *The New City* embodies the home truths that circulate in the world as portrayed by National Public Radio (Amidon has worked as a commentator on American issues for the BBC), and Amidon probably reflects the beliefs of many thoughtful people today.

Hence, he has little faith in the ability of planners, governmental or corporate, to realize grandiose visions, and mocks those who think that human nature will be transformed the moment people find themselves presented with an "abundance of public space" or an "equitable mix of housing." Yet he seems to accept the notion that the alternative to planning is that amalgam of chaos, race hatred, and ever-more-apparent social injustice that we all "know" the modern world to be.

Never alluding to the fact that planning schemes like urban renewal created many of the problems to which the planners in *The New City* are trying to respond, Amidon finds himself between two views of the world, one dead, the other powerless to be born. Rightly skeptical of the idea that a city (or a society) can be founded anew by adherence to the master plan, he has not yet heard anything about the beneficial tendency of anonymous processes—above all, markets—to coordinate the activities of people with differing and even conflicting ends.

Such a mindset borders on willful ignorance, as the evidence is all around him. Consider, for example, detested sprawl itself, the thing that Newton was invented to forestall. Advocates of centralized, governmental planning point to "strip" or "ribbon" development, characterized by miles of shopping centers flanked by main roads from urban cores, as a signal in-

stance of wasteful, undesirable expansion. What many fail to acknowledge is that strips are sometimes the result of government intervention in the shape of zoning or various forms of subsidies for developers. What they seem determined not to admit at all costs is that strip development is in many ways highly efficient, and that it reflects the preferences of many ordinary people.

Move a block or two away from a typical strip, and you are likely to find yourself on a quiet residential street whose inhabitants are as close to the shops and services they need as were most residents of the now idealized 19th-century town. Sprawl makes it possible for an awful lot of people to have a nice yard, to live on a street without much through traffic, and

Sprawl makes it possible for an awful lot of people to have a nice yard, to live on a street without much through traffic, and to be near the supermarket.

to be near the supermarket. That's no mean accomplishment. Such efficiencies, moreover, are not the result of a master plan but the cumulative effect of the decisions of individual home buyers looking for lower land prices and of businesses following their customers beyond what used to be the edge of town.

Sprawl, properly understood, should teach a lesson about the way that the unsupervised actions of individuals can spontaneously give rise to structures serving their needs, much as the unsupervised competition of plants and animals gives rise to stable ecosystems without the benefit of a presiding engineer. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who hanker after the job of engineer judge the results to fall woefully short of the ideal they have concocted for themselves.

Such lessons, however, are not in keeping with the temperament of a writer like

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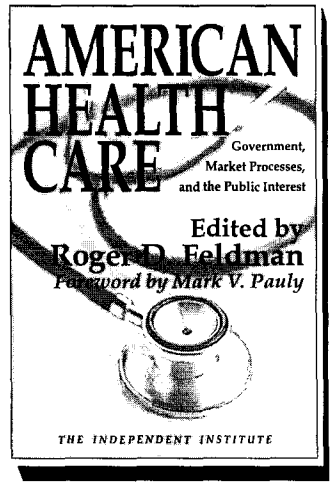
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Amidon, who has an unmistakable streak of Puritan idealism running through him. As one of his characters puts it, "People are animals," desperately in need of a stern guide to lead them into the peaceable kingdom but incapable of producing one from their ranks. A very American novel, *The New City* is the latest retelling of William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*, which chronicles the gradual diminishing of the pilgrim settlers' hope and zeal, and which remains our archetypal account of dreams deferred. The updated version suggests not the anxiety of a people suspended between God and the devil but rather the uncomfortable paralysis of those who believe that modern humanity faces a sad choice: planning or chaos. Amidon has made a small contribution toward keeping such souls misinformed.

Tom Peyser (tgpeyser@att.net) is the author of Utopia and Cosmopolis: Globalization in the Era of Literary Realism *(Duke University Press) and an associate professor of English at Randolph-Macon College.*

Looking Back in Anger

By Leonard A. Cole

The Plutonium Files: America's Secret Medical Experiments in the Cold War, by Eileen Welsome, New York: Dial Press, 576 pages, $26.95

In the 1970s, Americans might well have wondered if they were captive to a cadre of lunatic research doctors. Throughout the decade, disclosures of strange experiments conducted on unwitting citizens by their own government popped up with unnerving regularity.

The initial revelation came in 1972. A press report disclosed that during the previous 40 years, the U.S. Public Health Service had systematically studied 600 syphilitic black men. Centered in Tuskegee, Alabama, the study involved denying treatment to 400 of them so that Public Health Service doctors could observe the course of their illness. Several died from complications of syphilis, clueless that they had been in an experiment concocted by their amiable health care providers.

Public anger about the callousness of the study was intensified by its racist overtones. The project and its sponsors were castigated, and institutions around the country that sponsored human subject experiments began to establish panels to review their safety and ethics.

Meanwhile, reports about other disquieting experiments began to surface. Two years after the Tuskegee story, the public learned that during the 1950s Central Intelligence Agency researchers had slipped mind-altering substances into the drinks of unsuspecting victims to watch the effects. The drugs sometimes induced psychotic episodes that in at least one case led to a victim's death.

The survivors of a nuclear war "might not be highly civilized like we are," said one scientist. "They might not know anything about atomic warfare, for instance."

In 1976 came a news story about an odd Army program. From 1949 to 1969, scientists had conducted biological warfare tests by releasing bacteria and chemicals from sprayers, automobiles, and airplanes over American cities and states. During that 20-year period, millions of citizens were unknowingly breathing in the Army's test agents. The purpose was to see whether the microorganisms would spread and survive and whether the country would be vulnerable to an attack with lethal germs.

Army spokesmen contended that the test bacteria, which included *Serratia marcescens*, were harmless. But they evidently ignored reports that had appeared in the medical literature years before the tests indicating that the bacteria were dangerous to people in weakened conditions. Indeed, a 1950 Army test in San Francisco should by itself have been a show-stopper. Three days after the city was blanketed with *Serratia* bacteria, patients at a local hospital began coming down with *Serratia* infections. Eleven patients were infected, one of whom died. Yet Army scientists continued to spray citizens with so-called harmless bacteria for the next 19 years.

All these revelations appeared not long after people discovered they may have been at risk from the country's nuclear weapons programs. The United States, the Soviet Union, and several other countries had agreed in 1963 to ban aboveground nuclear testing because radiation poisons could travel far beyond the test sites. Before the ban, more than 500 bombs had been exploded outdoors, mostly by the two superpowers. In the process, millions of people were exposed to radioactivity that increased their risk of cancer. People who lived downwind from the sites were particularly vulnerable. So were thousands of American troops who in the 1950s were made to drill in radiation-filled environments after nuclear explosions.

Eileen Welsome's *The Plutonium Files* deals with radiation-related experiences and experiments. But her uncompromising brief against government, scientific, and medical officials who ran the radiation programs echoes earlier criticisms by others of Tuskegee, the CIA, and the Army germ warfare tests. Her interest in the subject began in the late 1980s. While reporting for the *Albuquerque Tribune*, she came upon Army documents indicating that at the dawn of the Atomic Age humans had been injected with plutonium to learn how much their bodies retained. She obtained more documents and tracked down survivors, family members, and

officials. Her findings led to a series of *Tribune* articles in November 1993 about the plutonium experiments.

Those articles were something of an epiphany for then–Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary, whose department guarded mounds of classified documents about long-ago radiation tests. That inventory included information about experiments under the department's predecessor agency, the Atomic Energy Commission, and before that the Manhattan Project, which produced the first atomic bomb in 1945.

A month after Welsome's articles appeared, O'Leary announced that she was "appalled and shocked" about the plutonium injections. President Bill Clinton then ordered federal agencies to open all records on human radiation experiments, and he appointed an Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments to review the matter. The committee learned that hundreds of tests had been conducted. Thousands of documents and interviews later, the committee's 1995 report empathized with the many people who had been victimized by "arrogance and paternalism on the part of government officials and the biomedical community."

Welsome is most effective when describing the poor, often uneducated souls who were unwitting guinea pigs. One subject's daughter lamented that telling her father that he was injected with plutonium "would be like telling him he was injected with ice cream." Names and addresses were hard to come by because identities were buried in anonymous aggregates or referred to by code.

But her sleuthing identified a subject called "CAL-1" as Albert Stevens, then a 58-year-old house painter who had moved from Ohio to California in the 1920s in search of a better climate for his asthmatic wife. In 1945, diagnosed with cancer, he was injected with plutonium days before portions of his liver and spleen were removed. He had no idea he was part of a radiation experiment even as his urine and stools were collected to measure their plutonium concentrations. The medical insult to Stevens was compounded when analysis of his removed tissues showed no signs of cancer, just inflammation from a gastric ulcer.

No less dismaying was what happened

AN ENEMY OF THE STATE
The Life of Murray N. Rothbard
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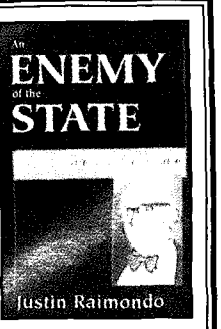

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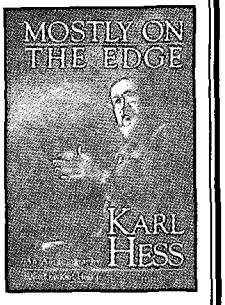

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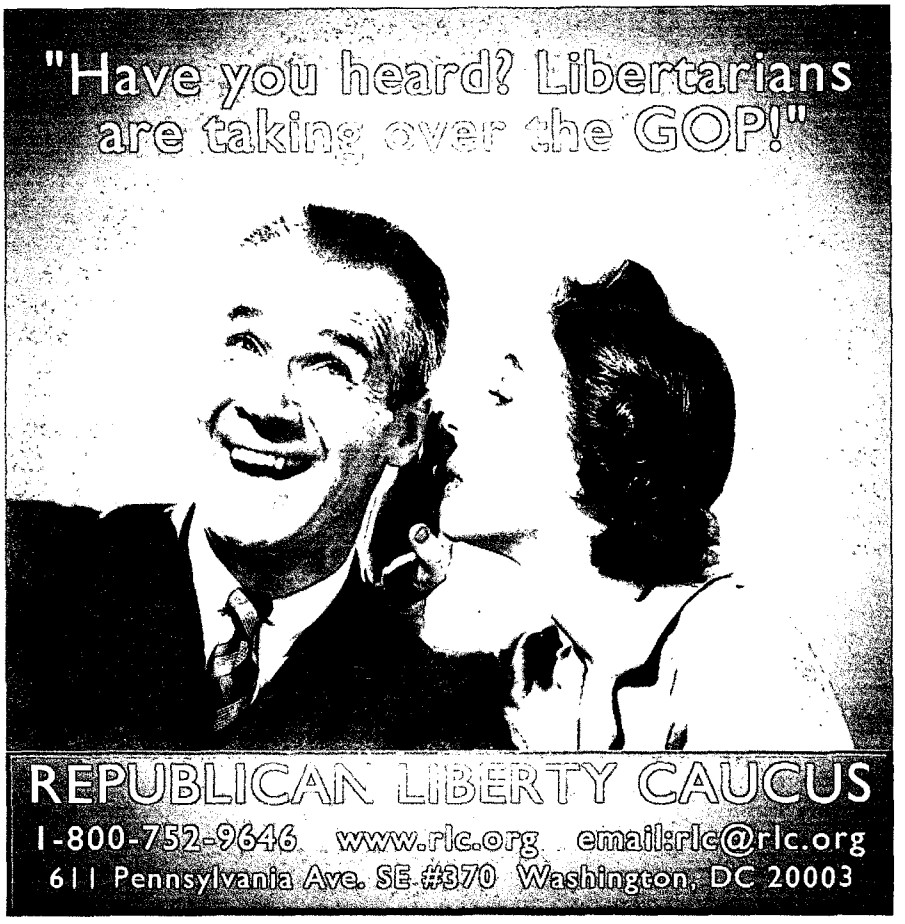
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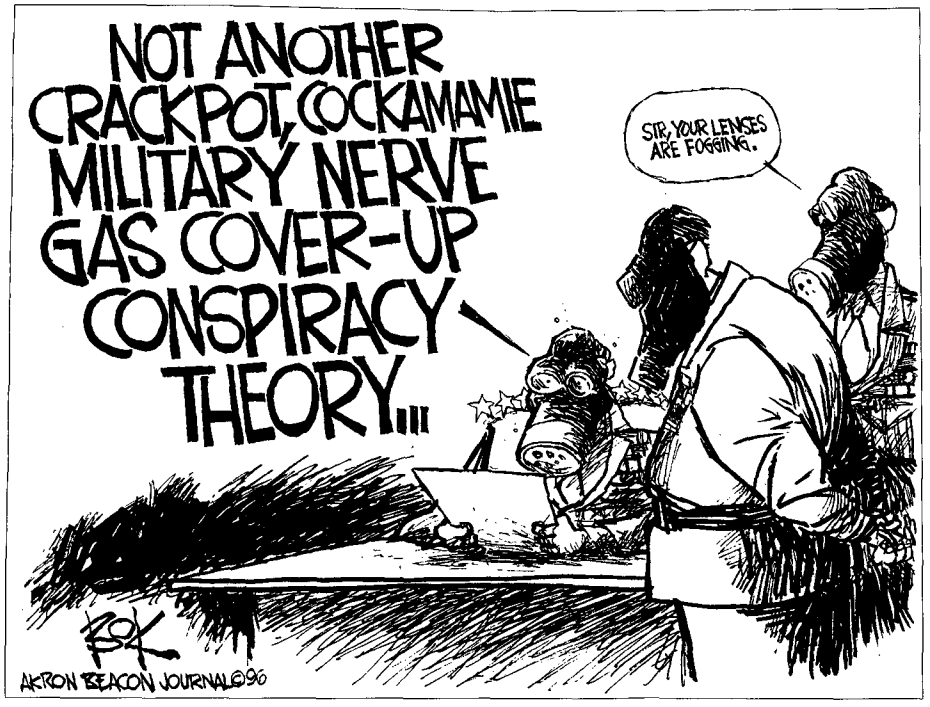
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to "CAL-3." That was Elmer Allen, who in 1947 was a 36-year-old railroad porter whose leg was scheduled for amputation. Doctors injected plutonium into his presumably cancerous leg. After surgery the leg was packaged off to a laboratory for plutonium measurements. Neither Stevens nor Allen nor the 16 other subjects injected with plutonium between 1945 and 1947 knew the real purpose of the injections. Nor, a few years later, did the 74 boys at the Fernald school for retarded and troubled children in Massachusetts know they were eating radioactive elements in their oatmeal. Nor did 829 pregnant women know that the "nutrition" cocktails they were drinking at a Tennessee prenatal clinic were laced with radioactive iron. The doctors in charge never let on that the purpose was to measure the amount of radioactive materials absorbed by their bodies.

Most of the radiation experiments, though not all, seem to have caused no ill effects. Welsome herself acknowledges that the small amounts of radioactive materials used in the majority of experiments "probably caused no harm." When she caught up with Elmer Allen's widow in 1992, she learned that he had died the year before from complications of pneumonia at 80. Still, Mrs. Allen spoke touchingly of how her husband had been exploited. "It just gives me a better view of how people will do you when they feel like you don't know better," she said.

But Welsome also reviews a horror project in which subjects knew they would suffer radiation injury. Between 1963 and 1971, 131 men in Oregon and Washington prisons underwent radiation of their testicles in experiments sponsored by the Atomic Energy Commission. The commissioners wanted to learn how much radiation would permanently damage sperm cells. Volunteers received $5 a month while in the program, up to $25 for a testicular biopsy, and $100 for a vasectomy at the end of the program. The tests were halted when some researchers began to wonder whether prisoners, no matter how well instructed about the experiment, could truly be considered volunteers.

So who was doing all these tests, and do the testers deserve Welsome's unforgiving condemnation? "Beyond everything else," she writes, "the experiments violated a fundamental right that belongs to all competent adults: the right to control one's own body." Doubtless, the experiments commonly ignored the ethical requirement that human subjects be informed about the nature of the experiment and that they participate voluntarily.

From today's perch, the experiments seem indefensible, and their sponsors obtuse if not malicious. Yet there remains a nagging unease about describing the researchers as aberrational or evil. Welsome's own reporting records the eminence of many of the practitioners and their institutions. Indeed, the idea for the human plutonium experiments came from Manhattan Project physicians, led by the project's medical director, Dr. Stafford Warren, a respected radiologist.

Wanting to know more about the risk of plutonium and other radioactive materials, Warren brought the proposal to J. Robert Oppenheimer, the venerated scientific director of the Manhattan Project. Oppenheimer endorsed Warren's proposal, suggesting only that the experiments not be conducted at the project's Los Alamos laboratories. This was evidently for practical reasons, since Oppenheimer said that Los Alamos "was not equipped for biological experiments."

The injections subsequently were given to patients being "treated" at many of the country's finest institutions, including the University of Rochester, the University of California in San Francisco, and the University of Chicago. Similarly, the Fernald boys were part of an experiment devised by scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The radioactive iron experiment on the pregnant women was at Vanderbilt University.

Welsome dismisses observers who allow that these and other Cold War era experiments were understandable by the standards of the time. She appears perplexed to find that many surviving scientists still do not "accept the idea that they or their peers had committed any wrongs." Her arguments are not strange to me. In *Clouds of Secrecy: The Army's Germ-Warfare Tests over Populated Areas* (1990), I expressed similar misgivings about the Army's biological warfare tests.

After all, the well-publicized Nuremberg Code was part of the postwar verdict against Nazi doctors who killed thousands of Jews and others in ghastly experiments. It unambiguously affirmed the ethical requirement of informed consent. Welsome also notes that the Atomic Energy Commission in 1947 and the Defense Department in 1953 had rules "requiring researchers to obtain the consent of sick patients for therapeutic and nontherapeutic experiments."

But the fact that so many reputable researchers were ignoring the standards is puzzling. The likely explanation is that the values of the time were still in transition. The social environment did not yet fully match the newly underscored standards. Moreover, it was a time when authority of many kinds—governmental, scientific, medical—was commonly trusted and deferred to. Citizens had faith in a government that had led them to victory over the Germans and Japanese and now was protecting them against new enemies.

Scientific authority commanded respect by virtue of spectacular scientific achievements, most obviously splitting the atom. Medical authority derived from a longstanding deference to the healer. Doctors traditionally were demigods who were not obliged to detail their treatments to patients. The arrangement was not simply an arbitrary imposition by the powerful over the powerless but was largely accepted by a deferential citizenry. By the 1970s, deference to authority had yielded to increasing skepticism. Disclosures about the array of unethical experiments only enhanced a distrust of authority seeded by the Vietnam War and Watergate.

Appreciating that shift in values would have helped Welsome's presentation. Instead, her division between good actors and bad is too neat and appears self-righteous. She condemns the findings of the president's advisory committee as "disappointing and timid." She condemns the post–World War II atmosphere that encouraged doctors to publish papers and view "patients as little more than white mice." She condemns everyone who ran the Energy Department and its predecessor agencies before O'Leary, calling them an unbroken "line of steely-eyed patriots."

Conversely, Welsome glorifies O'Leary, suggesting that her resignation at the end of Clinton's first term was prompted in part by bureaucrats who resented her shining "the bright light of truth" on the radiation experiments. O'Leary's infamous trade missions "may have been overstaffed," concedes Welsome, but she implies that Republicans overreacted with "hostile questions." Welsome surely understates the magnitude of problems that O'Leary brought on herself. She writes nothing about the $4.5 million that O'Leary spent on foreign trips, including one to India with an entourage of 76 in a plane that had previously been leased by Madonna. O'Leary also was found to have spent $43,000 to find out which reporters were writing favorable articles. And as department records later showed, she routinely manipulated statistics to exaggerate the number of Energy Department contracts with businesses owned by women and minorities.

None of this minimizes the service that O'Leary and the administration performed by opening the radiation records or that Welsome performed with her compelling descriptions of the experiments. But the lack of balance in Wel-

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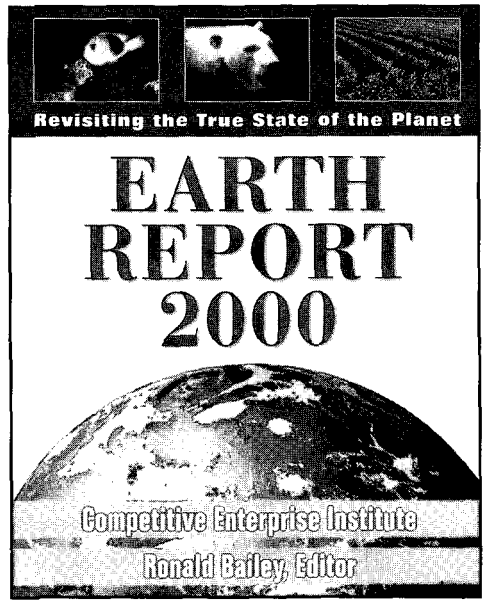

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some's treatment of O'Leary mirrors her insensitivity to the value differences between the postwar decades and the present. Public demands for accountability simply were not the same. The distinction is wonderfully, if inadvertently and grotesquely, demonstrated by a scientist who, at a 1955 Atomic Energy Commission conference, estimated that after all-out atomic war, a few people would survive and "keep the race going." According to this scientist, "They might not populate the earth with just the descendants we would like to see. They might not be highly civilized like we are. They might not know anything about atomic warfare, for example."

Cold and ludicrous as such a calculus now seems, there is no indication that it put off any of the scientist's listeners. Unless we believe that he and thousands of other American scientific, medical, and governmental leaders were psychopaths, we must allow that they were acting within the value framework of the time. It would take another generation for values to catch up to the newly codified standards.

Welsome's manner of criticism has implications beyond the radiation and experimentation issues. By using a contemporary template to rigidly judge yesterday's behavior, she implicitly invites future generations to do the same to us. Who is to say which values that today are embraced by large segments of the population could not be viewed with unforgiving contempt in the future? Frying humans in electric chairs? Killing a fetus, or, conversely, denying choice to a pregnant woman? Refusing same-sex partners the opportunity to marry? Whatever one's personal views on these issues, fair-minded observers understand that people of good will may be found on all sides. Of course, some behaviors are so egregious as to deserve condemnation in any era: The Nazi medical experiments, for example, in which victims were injected with toxins or placed in high pressure chambers to observe the manner in which they would die.

To extend a generosity of understanding to earlier generations is not to excuse or defend past reprehensible behavior, but to acknowledge that future generations will almost certainly judge many of our own actions—even and perhaps especially those done for the "greater good"—as harshly as Welsome judges the radiation researchers.

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Category Killers

By Jesse Walker

A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s, by Rebecca E. Klatch, Berkeley: University of California Press, 386 pages, $22.95

Those who believe in stable, immutable political categories will have a hard time interpreting the career of Cindy Decker (a pseudonym). Decker's mother belonged to the John Birch Society, and Cindy's earliest political views, formed as a teen in the early 1960s, reflected those of the radical right. Another Bircher arranged for Cindy to spend two weeks at the Freedom School, an academy in Colorado Springs run by free market guru Robert LeFevre. There, Birchite skepticism about socialism veered into skepticism about any sort of state, and she found herself taking in lectures espousing anarchism, atheism, and pacifism.

Decker got involved with a fellow she met there, and he drew her into the Minutemen, an anti-communist paramilitary group. At the same time—1964—she started going to the University of Kansas, where she got involved in the civil rights, antiwar, and hippie movements. Increasingly disturbed by the racist element in the Minutemen, she wound up moving to Berkeley and joining the national council of Students for a Democratic Society. There, among socialists, she espoused libertarianism—even as she joined a drive to organize tuna cannery workers.

There must have been something in the Kansas air: Gus diZerega studied there too, and through a series of odd events managed simultaneously to chair the campus chapters of SDS and the conservative Young Americans for Freedom. DiZerega's introduction to non-Euclidean politics came at the YAF chapter's third meeting, when a beautiful young woman—perhaps Decker, though diZerega doesn't identify her—arrived and sat in the back of the room. She turned out to be the secretary of the local SDS, and after the meeting she told diZerega that his group was a bunch of "fascists."

"Fascists believe in big government," she said. "You believe in the draft, don't you?"

"Well, yeah," replied diZerega.

"Doesn't the draft mean big government controlling people?" she asked.

Suddenly on the defensive, diZerega decided, after a little more back and forth, that he should try attacking instead. "Well, you socialists believe in big government," he said.

"I'm not a socialist," she replied. "I'm an anarchist." And that, diZerega reports, was when things started "to get real bent."

Both of the above stories come from *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s*, a remarkable book by Rebecca Klatch, a sociologist at the University of California at San Diego. Many histories of SDS have been written, and lately there have been several volumes about YAF as well. (See "Radical Squares," February 1998.) Klatch is one of the few scholars to look at both. The result is a study that is complex, textured, and three-dimensional.

Klatch's book was inspired by Karl Mannheim's essay "The Problem of Generations," which, she writes, "argues that people in the same age group share a historical location in the same way that people of the same class share a social location." Within these generations, she continues, "there exist separate and even antagonistic generation-units," which

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"I WAS ON THE FAST TRACK TO BE A DOPE-SMOKING, FLAG-BURNING SDS LENINIST RADICAL... THEN I DROPPED OUT AND DID BANKING."

"form a dynamic relationship of tension. At the same time that they are in conflict, they are also oriented toward one another; their antagonisms are part of an ongoing conversation." Curious how people "could have lived through the same events and interpreted them in such radically different ways," Klatch applied Mannheim's model to those who came of age in the '60s, interviewing 74 veterans of SDS and YAF.

Klatch entered her project understanding that generations aren't monolithic. She emerged understanding that "left" and "right" aren't monolithic either. Many pictures emerge from her book, but the clearest image is one of openness, even adventure: of young people trying to make sense of the world around them, exploring it, trying out ideas without much regard for rigid categories.

Yes, the book contains a lot of the life stories you'd expect: SDSers who became professors or therapists, YAFers who took a direct route to button-down Beltway jobs. But what to make of Decker (whose path eventually earned her a master's in public health) or diZerega (now a professor of political science, an environmentalist, and a Wiccan elder)?

Or Rob Tyler (another pseudonym), a former Youth for Goldwater who turned to anarchism, got purged from YAF, and bitterly "spent the whole summer afterward smoking hashish and listening to Dylan records"? In the '70s, Tyler moved to Los Angeles' Venice Beach, got into Rastafarianism, inhaled a lot of weed, started talking with Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees, was horrified by their stories of Communist atrocities, and ended up working for the Reagan campaign. These days he's a lawyer. Got that?

And what about SDSer Barry Skolnick? (Yes, that's another pseudonym.) A red-diaper baby, in the '70s he joined the October League, a Leninist group, and set to "organizing" the factories. The League fell apart in 1979, and Skolnick passed through a series of jobs—cabbie, teacher, reporter—before starting work at a company that manufactures truck parts. Now he runs his own business, where, he told Klatch, he's "ironically...trying to develop joint ventures between American truck manufacturers and transportation companies and Soviet companies." (This was in 1990.) He is disillusioned with Marxism—he's "down on genocide and mass executions and gulags, reform through labor, and those kinds of things." But he's still a leftist, though he believes that "without the free market, you can't have democracy."

These people aren't Hollywood-hatched ciphers à la Forrest Gump, trekking through each standard station of the '60s cross. These are lives that actual people actually led, each with its own eccentric detours. Even the well-known interviewees—Weatherman terrorist turned Democratic activist Bernardine Dohrn, libertarian folksinger turned conservative congressman Dana Rohrabacher

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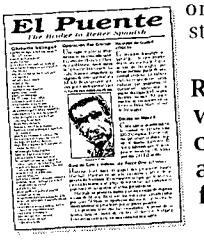

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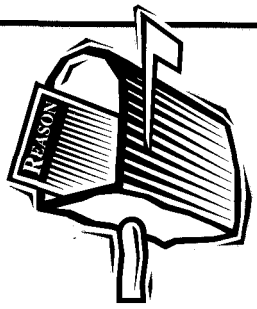

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—took unusual paths. If anything, their careers seem stranger than the rest.

None of this is to suggest that SDS and YAF weren't very different groups, or that they weren't generally opposed to one another. Klatch finds several clear distinctions between them—and, within YAF, between the libertarian and traditionalist factions. (Today the word *traditionalist* has an agrarian aura, but back then it simply denoted support for relatively free markets, the Cold War, and "ordered liberty.") Besides the obvious ideological differences, there are recurrent sociological patterns: Most of the interviewees came from privileged backgrounds, but the leftists tended to come from the highest crust, with the libertarians in turn enjoying more privileges than the trads. Younger radicals were more likely to join the hippie subculture than were those who joined the New Left in the early '60s; libertarians, similarly, were more likely to go psychedelic than traditionalists were.

Pacifism and the Cold War, traditional families and feminism, Reaganism and the counterculture: Klatch forces us to consider the unpredictable ways they've influenced each other.

But these are broad statements, more a background against which people can move than a set of rules that everyone is obliged to follow. And even these generalizations were no doubt fuzzier among '60s youth than Klatch's book implies. Her sample, after all, consists of committed activists, people who were far more ideological than their peers. What about the freshman who flirts with socialism, reads Ayn Rand, and joins a bowdlerized Buddhist group, without committing to any particular vision? What about the hard-working community college student who plans to be a nurse, usually votes Republican—and experiments with LSD? What about the vaguely liberal 20-year-old who goes to peace marches to pick up women? The activists Klatch interviewed helped launch the sweeping social transformations of the past 35 years, putting such notions as cohabitation and gay rights onto the agenda. But it was these other people—less visible and more eclectic—who integrated those changes into everyday life. (And it was they who let other ideas of the era, from rural communes to geodesic domes, rot in history's dustbin.)

There are other inevitable distortions, characteristics that distinguish this book's activists from most of their peers. Most, as I mentioned, came from relatively privileged backgrounds: For more than half, both parents had completed at least some college. Many were raised by people who cared deeply about politics. Only three of the SDSers and one of the YAFers are black. This may be a fair sample of those two organizations, but it does not represent a whole generation.

I don't fault Klatch for this—despite *A Generation Divided*'s sweeping title, most Americans who reached adulthood in the '60s simply lay outside her study's boundaries. But her book opens the door to those other stories, to a near-infinite range of events and intersections that our historical stereotypes ignore. Klatch's book might inspire another scholar to explore those other strains of '60s youth. Or perhaps stories such as Decker's and Tyler's will inspire someone to look for more ideological border crossers of the era—and not just among young people. For instance: It's well established, though rarely remembered, that many of the most militant labor dissidents of the '60s—angry rank-and-filers who thought their unions were too supine—voted for George Wallace.

Pacifism and the Cold War, traditional families and feminism, Reaganism and the counterculture: Klatch's book doesn't dissolve these seeming opposites, but it does force us to consider the unpredictable ways they've influenced each other. The categories we impose on the past aren't as stable as we sometimes assume. History, after all, is not the sum of our theories; it is the sum of our chaotic lives. ◆

Jesse Walker (jwalker@reason.com) is an associate editor of REASON.

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Man of Mettle

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What a long, strange trip this honorary Oscar took when Jane Fonda handed it to Polish director Andrzej Wajda at this year's Academy Awards. Fonda was the highest-profile "revolutionary" of her generation before embarking on a series of identity shape-shifts that have included Fitness Queen, Trophy Wife, and now Born Again Christian. Wajda spent his life revealing revolution's moral fraudulence. Only Hollywood, in honoring him, could then have committed the kitsch of pairing him with Fonda.

"If you understood what communism was," Fonda reportedly told a Black Panthers fundraiser back in 1969, "you would pray on your knees that we would someday become communists." Wajda knew. His films chronicle the duplicity of the Soviet "liberators" who halted at the Vistula while resistance fighters were slaughtered in Warsaw (*Kanal*, 1957), the oppression of Polish workers (*Man of Marble*, 1977), and the rise of the Solidarity movement (*Man of Iron*, 1981), among much else.

Fonda offered some boilerplate about Wajda's courage, but said nothing of its context aside from a useless reference to "state censorship." Wajda provided his own context. "I thank the American friends of Poland," he said, "for helping my country rejoin Western civilization." **—C.P. Freund**

Making the Endangered Species Act Species-Friendly

erry L. Anderson is
he Martin and Illie
Anderson Senior
llow at the Hoover
nstitution and the
ecutive director of
Political Economy
Research Center.

When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently rejected a petition to list the prairie dog as an endangered species, twelve million prairie dogs must have heaved a collective sigh of relief.

Why a relief, you ask. After all, isn't listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) supposed to protect species from extinction?

The evidence suggests that it is not working. For example, statistics show that only thirty species have been removed from a list of thousands since the act was passed in 1973. Of these, seven were removed because they went extinct and eleven because additional data showed they were not really endangered in the first place. The remaining twelve delisted species were either located outside the United States (and hence not affected by ESA) or recovered for reasons unrelated to the ESA such as the banning of DDT.

Landowners v. Endangered Species

Even worse than the dismal recovery rates is the fact that regulation under the ESA can actually exacerbate extinction. In an effort to protect endangered species, the ESA makes it illegal to "take" a listed species, meaning "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." In other words, if a landowner's actions are interpreted as a "take," land uses may be strictly regulated. This might encourage landowners to "shoot, shovel, and shut up."

But landowners don't have to go this far; they can take perfectly legal preemptive action to keep the species off private property. A famous North Carolina case shows how this worked with the endangered red- cockaded woodpecker (RCW), which lives in old-growth pines. After Ben Cone was prevented from harvesting 1,500 acres of his 7,200-acre property because it was home to RCWs, he started cutting his trees at forty years of age instead of eighty, thus eliminating the old-growth trees in which RCWs might live.

Environmentalists contend that such cases are isolated acts carried out by lawbreakers, but a study in *Political Environmentalism* (Hoover Institution Press) shows systematic evidence to the contrary. Examining hundreds of logging operations in North Carolina, Dean Lueck and Jeffrey Michael find that the average age of harvest falls from nearly seventy years if there are no RCW colonies nearby to almost half that if there are twenty-five colonies within twenty-five miles of the logging site. They conclude that their "finding validates the concerns of some environmentalists who have noted that RCW populations have been declining on private land during the 28 years the red-cockaded woodpecker has been regulated by the ESA." In short, ESA makes endangered species the enemy of landowners.

Compensation as a Solution

With ESA up for renewal, it is time to consider using carrots rather than sticks to save species. If the federal government would spend a fraction of what it spends on ESA regulation to actually compensate landowners who provide habitat, we could be removing species from the list rather than adding bureaucrats to the federal payroll.

— Terry L. Anderson

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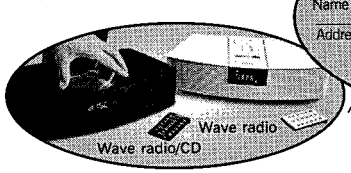

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